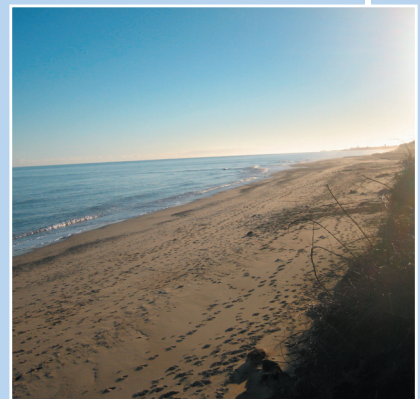


April 2008

# Waveney District Landscape Character Assessment



Final Report for  
Waveney District Council  
by  
Land Use Consultants





**WAVENEY DISTRICT  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER  
ASSESSMENT -  
FINAL REPORT**

**Prepared for Waveney District  
Council  
April 2008**

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Appendix 3: Glossary

### **Acknowledgements**

- I. This report was prepared by Land Use Consultants: Kate Ahern, Andrew Tempany and Rowan Longhurst (authors), Diana Manson and Julian Rosser (GIS/Graphics). The study was steered by a client group formed from Officers from Great Yarmouth Borough and Waveney Councils, including James Harland (GYBC), Sarah Slade (GYBC) and Sapphire Franks (WDC). Consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders. However the views in the report are those of Land Use Consultants.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report contains the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of Waveney District. The study was undertaken in parallel with the Landscape Character Assessment of Great Yarmouth Borough and steered by an advisory group representing officers from the councils. The assessment nests within the national and county landscape framework including the recent Level 2 Landscape Descriptive Units or LDUs and the Suffolk Countywide landscape typology. It considers the rural landscapes within the District and takes account of the nationally designated landscapes of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The assessment is broadly consistent with the LCA which is being undertaken for the Broads Authority, which partly extends into Waveney District to the west. This assessment specifically excludes the Broads Authority Executive Area. Account has also been taken of the landscape assessment undertaken for the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, part of which lies within the District, in addition to the landscape character assessments prepared for adjacent local planning authorities.

The Landscape Character Assessment draws on the detailed information contained in the Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation and the Ecological Network Mapping Project.

The document is supported by a GIS data set.

## **What Is LCA?**

Landscape Character Assessment is an accepted and recognised method for understanding what the landscape is like today, how it came to be like that, and how it may change in the future. Landscape character assessment describes and classifies the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that makes one landscape different from another rather than better or worse. Character is what makes each part of the landscape distinct and gives each area its particular sense of place.

The landscape character approach considers that all landscapes are valuable and seeks to protect their essential character. The purpose of landscape character assessment is to help ensure that change and development does not undermine what ever is characteristic or valued about a particular place, and that ways of improving the character of a place can be considered.

The Landscape Character Assessment of Waveney District will provide a comprehensive landscape evidence base to help underpin planning and management policy and decision-making in the new Local Development Framework (LDF). It will assist in the preparation of policies and proposals for future Development Plan Documents, inform planning decisions and identify priorities for enhancement, conservation and management of the landscape.

## What does the Waveney District LCA contain?

The landscape character assessment has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance<sup>1</sup>. The findings have been subject to consultation with stakeholders including a local consultation workshop.

This report presents a characterisation of the whole district at 1:25,000 scale. The study has identified 10 **landscape types** – each with a relatively homogeneous character with similar physical and cultural attributes. The landscape types are subdivided into component landscape **character areas**. These are discrete geographic areas that possess the common characteristics described in the landscape type. There are 23 **character areas** in the study area each with a distinct and recognisable local identity. The character areas form the fundamental unit for this assessment and the basis for a detailed description and evaluation.

The landscape classification of Waveney District is set out in Chapter 6, with the relationship with character areas in the adjoining Great Yarmouth Borough noted.

Each character area sets out the following information:

- **Description** – outlines key characteristics and describes character under the headings of physical/natural character, historic character, settlement and built character and perceptual/visual character.
- **Evaluation** – summarises positive landscape features of significance and inherent landscape sensitivities/visual sensitivities, and assesses the current state (condition) of the landscape, plus a review of forces for change. The evaluation concludes with an overarching strategic objective followed by more detailed considerations in respect of both landscape management and in relation to new development.

## Who is the LCA aimed at?

The document is aimed at a wide audience. It provides a technical document and evidence to underpin landscape policies in the preparation of the new Local Development Framework. It will provide key information for use by both developers and development control officers in helping to make decisions on the appropriate location, scale and design of new development. It will also be available to the wider public with a general interest in their local landscape and provides a framework for more detailed studies of local landscape character for example through parish plans or village design statements. The assessment also has wider applications, for example, in influencing land management decisions.

## How should the Waveney District LCA be used?

The LCA has been undertaken at 1:25,000 scale and therefore provides character-based information for use at this scale. There are a number of considerations governing its use:

- it is a strategic study rather than a detailed field by field survey and any detailed decisions will therefore also need to consider specific local circumstances;
- the assessment concentrates on the rural landscapes of the study area and excludes detailed settlement fringe or settlement considerations;

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<sup>1</sup> The former Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage: Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland. 2002. CAX 84/F



- character area boundaries usually represent a 'zone of transition' and in considering any change within any one character area it is often useful to consider effects on adjacent areas.



# I. INTRODUCTION

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## THE LANDSCAPE OF WAVENEY

- I.1. Waveney District is located in the east of England, covering approximately 375 square kilometres. The location and context of the District are set out at Figure I.1. Lowestoft, Kessingland and Southwold are the principal settlements within the District, located on the east coast, with other smaller settlements including 'The Saints' villages in the western part of the District.
- I.2. The District includes part of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads (which have National Park Status, are the largest protected wetlands in Britain and the third largest inland waterway), with the Broads Authority Executive Area fringing and partly within the westernmost part of the District alongside the Waveney Valley. As such, landscapes within Waveney District form part of the setting of the Broads. The coastline between Southwold and Pakefield is designated as part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- I.3. The Broads are recognised as a naturally functioning wetland ecosystem of international cultural, environmental and ecological importance. The network of inland waterways and large scale water bodies which are the legacy of flooded former peat extraction creates not only significant opportunities for water based recreation, but also a rich range of wetland habitats, including wet meadow and grazing marsh/pasture, in addition to areas of alder and willow carr and reedbeds. The landscape of the Broads, in particular the wide, flat Waveney Valley, is open and exposed, and of relatively large scale and simple composition at points, and there is strong intervisibility with other landscapes within Waveney District.
- I.4. The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, part of which falls within Waveney District encompasses a varied range of landscape types defined by geology and shaped by the interaction of coastal processes and the elements with the coastal landscape. A simple geology based on sedimentary processes, such as the sandy Crag bedrock has resulted in the creation of soft, erosion prone cliff faces at Southwold and Pakefield. A number of estuarine valleys cut the landscape, creating broad, marshland estuaries as they open onto the coast, with small scale coastal broads and meres often evident, behind low coastal spits and shingle bars.
- I.5. The presence of sandy drift deposits created a landscape of acid heathland behind the coastal cliffs, although these were vulnerable to early Enclosure as medieval and later landowners sought to maximise the productivity of their land for grazing and later arable cultivation into the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries and the modern period. Scots pine windbreaks, planted to stabilise this unstable 'duneland' sandy soil are a distinctive, emblematic feature of this landscape which is commonly known as the 'Sandlings'. Equally characteristic are areas of coniferous plantation and gorse scrub/birch pioneer woodland denoting areas of relict heathland.
- I.6. Beyond the AONB and the estuaries are low lying pastoral river valleys and areas of transitional, undulating farmland cut by minor tributary watercourses, and ultimately rising to more elevated plateau landscapes on the clays and Lowestoft tills. The

plateaux are characterised by the influence of historic landed estates and wooded parklands such as Sotterley and Benacre, and by an intricate early Enclosure co axial field pattern. As such the landscape of Waveney District has a diverse 'mosaic' character, often complex and strongly transitional in quality.

## **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- I.7. This report forms part of the Evidence Base for the Waveney District Local Development Framework, and will inform future landscape planning policy. It will also provide evidence for the consideration of individual planning applications. The study describes, assesses and evaluates the character of the landscape within the study area. It identifies strategic objectives both for landscape management and enhancement and considerations for future change and development within each character area. These recommendations have been developed in close consultation with the client group and key stakeholders.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

- I.8. The structure of this report is as follows:

**Chapter 1: Introduction:** Introduces the landscape of the study area and sets out the structure of the report.

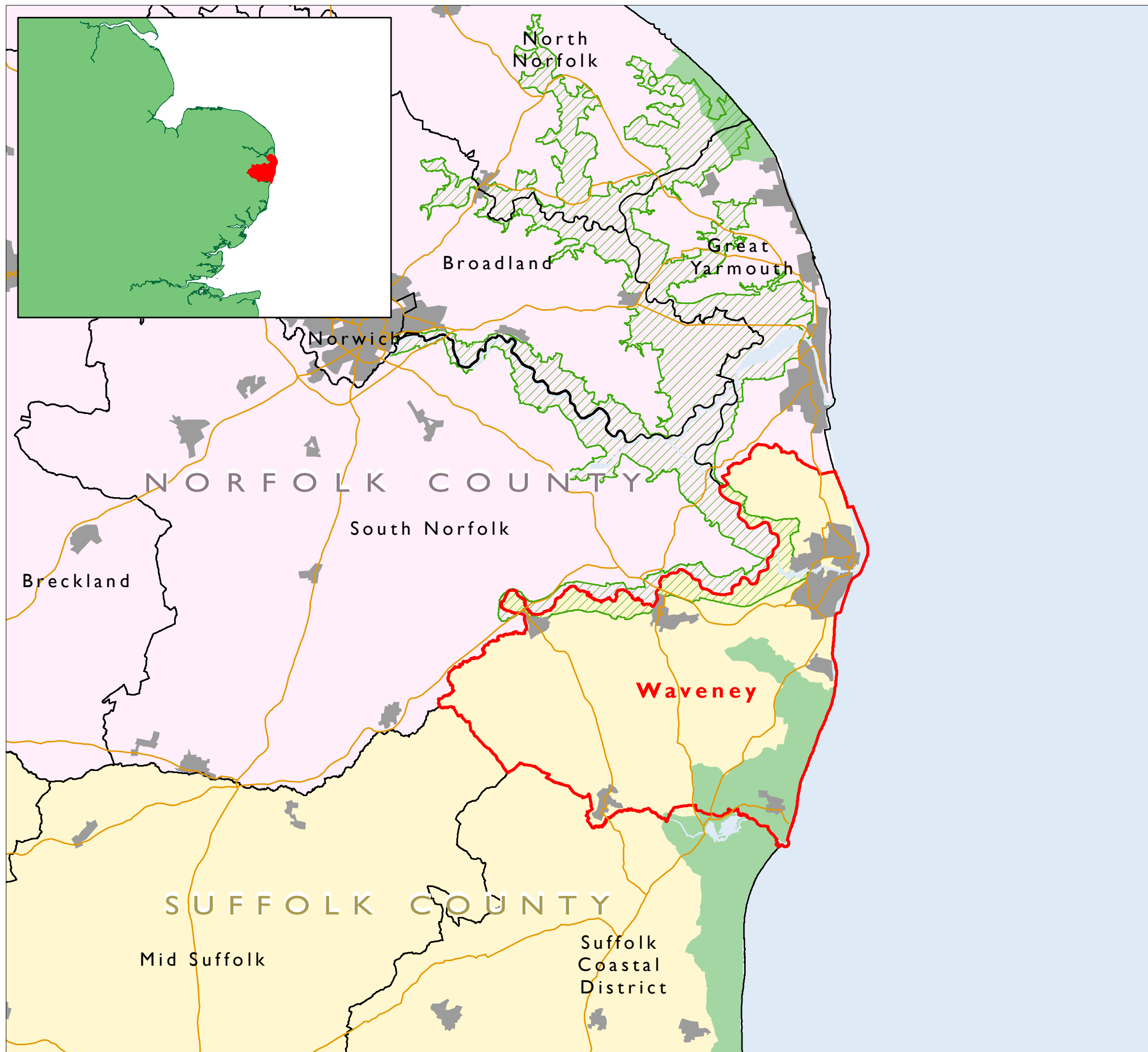
**Chapter 2: Method Statement:** Outlines the method used to undertake the landscape character assessment.

**Chapter 3: Landscape Character Context:** Outlines the landscape character context of the District.

**Chapter 4: Physical influences and ecological context:** Establishes the physical factors that have influenced the character of the area, including geology, topography, hydrology and soils, in addition to providing an overview of ecological characteristics across the District.

**Chapter 5: Human influences and the historic environment:** Establishes the human and cultural influences that have shaped the character of Waveney District.



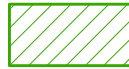

**Chapter 6: The Landscape Character of Waveney District:** This is the main body of the report and contains descriptions and evaluations of the landscape character areas including a broad landscape strategy for each area leading on to more detailed strategic objectives.

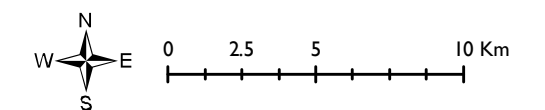


## Waveney District LCA

Figure I.1 Location and Context of the Study Area

### Key

-  Waveney District boundary
-  District Boundaries
-  The Broads Authority
-  Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Source: Ordnance Survey and Natural England

Date: 29/01/2008

Revision:





## 2. METHOD STATEMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. The method for undertaking the landscape character assessment follows the current accepted method promoted by the former Countryside Agency (now Natural England) as set out in the document *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002)*. The process for undertaking this assessment involves five main stages, described below, namely:
- Data Collation;
  - Characterisation;
  - Field survey;
  - Evaluation;
  - Consultation.
- 2.2. The assessment has been prepared within the framework of the former Countryside Agency and the former English Nature's Countryside Character Initiative and the Suffolk Level 2 LDUs (Living Landscapes)/County Wide Landscape Character Typology (1:50,000 scale). This study was undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000.
- 2.3. A Geographic Information System (GIS) was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data. Land Use Consultants operates ESRI ArcView.

### DATA COLLATION

- 2.4. This involved the collation and mapping of a wide range of existing information on the characteristics of Waveney District from a variety of sources including baseline maps of geology, topography, soils and hydrology; schedules of designated and protected areas and features; and the Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation, in addition to Ecological Network/Heathland Opportunity Mapping. The following baseline data was compiled and mapped:
- National countryside character areas;
  - National landscape typology;
  - Natural areas;
  - Suffolk County Level 2 LDU's and County LCT's;
  - Landscape Character Assessments for adjacent Districts;
  - Solid and drift geology (1:50,000);
  - Soils data (1:250,000);

- Adopted and Interim Waveney District Local Plans (including designated sites);
  - The outputs of the Ecological Network Mapping Project/Suffolk Heathland Opportunity Mapping.
- 2.5. A review was also undertaken of physical and human influences in the District, as well as current initiatives, including the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Plan and emerging approaches to shoreline management.

## CHARACTERISATION

- 2.6. The draft assessment was arrived at by overlaying the individual datasets in GIS onto a 1:25,000 OS base map and identifying common patterns of characteristics. The approach follows best practice as promoted by the former Countryside Agency in the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) in maintaining a distinction between landscape types and character areas, and developing a hierarchical approach as follows:
- **Landscape Types** - which are generic and share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences, e.g. *Estuarine Marsh*.
  - **Character Areas** - which are single and unique, discrete geographical areas of the landscape type, e.g. *Blyth Estuary*.
- 2.7. The naming of landscape types and character areas has taken account of adjacent landscape character assessments, to ensure consistent terminology as far as possible.
- 2.8. The study specifically excluded an analysis of the areas within the town and village development limits. Therefore, although the smaller villages were considered as a part of a wider landscape context and character, no specific townscape or urban character assessments were undertaken.

## SURVEY

- 2.9. A field survey was undertaken to appraise the draft characterisation. There were two stages of fieldwork – one in October 2007 to confirm boundaries and to undertake the fieldwork for a pilot area, and the second stage in November/December 2007 to complete the gathering of data for all other landscape character areas.
- 2.10. Fieldwork was required to:
- confirm the draft boundaries;
  - gather data to feed into the descriptions;
  - gather evaluation data;
  - ensure photographic coverage of all the character areas within the District.



- 2.11. A systematic and rigorous approach was adopted for the survey, with information recorded on 1:25,000 scale maps and a field record sheet (shown at **Appendix I**). A comprehensive photo record was also made.

**A note on boundary lines:** The precision of boundaries drawn around landscape character areas and types varies with the scale and level of detail of the assessment. This assessment has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 which means that it is suitable for use at this scale. In reality landscape character rarely changes abruptly and the boundaries indicated therefore sometimes represent zones of transition in character relating to changes in topography, geology, soils, cultural patterns, land use etc. rather than marked changes on the ground. In practice boundaries of this nature have frequently been drawn to follow physical or mappable features such as roads, lanes or field boundaries which provide 'best fit'.

**A note on character areas:** Landscape character types and areas have been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 and are suitable for use at this scale. Landscape types have generic characteristics which apply to all the areas falling within that type. Character areas share these characteristics with other areas of the same landscape type but have a particular 'sense of place'.

## **EVALUATION**

- 2.12. The evaluation undertaken as part of the Waveney District LCA follows current best practice and was developed in consultation with the Steering Group.
- 2.13. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide the basis for strategic landscape planning and management and to assist in the development control process by providing a more informed response to development proposals affecting the landscape. In order to achieve these aims the evaluation developed judgements on:
- (i) positive landscape features of significance and inherent landscape sensitivities;
  - (ii) inherent visual sensitivity;
  - (iii) landscape condition and quality (the current state of the landscape);
  - (iv) landscape change (including past and potential future change);
  - (v) strategic objectives, in the form of a guiding landscape strategy and principles to help achieve the strategy.

### **Key Positive Features/ Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- 2.14. This identified a subset of key characteristics - the key positive attributes that, if lost or changed, would alter the character of the landscape.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivity**

- 2.15. This identified visual sensitivity based on observations about the visual prominence of the landscape (as a result of landform influences and vegetation cover). The sensitivity analysis considered strategic sensitivity concepts or inherent sensitivities rather than sensitivities to specific types of development, in view of the scale of the

study, and the fact that it is a rural LCA, which does not consider settlement fringes. Detailed landscape and visual sensitivity and capacity analysis in relation to any specific development proposal should build upon this assessment of inherent sensitivity, but will require a separate, detailed study.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- 2.16. This part of the evaluation identified the current condition of the landscape as observed through field survey.

### **Landscape Change**

- 2.17. This part of the evaluation identified forces based on past landscape change, drawn from field survey observations, desktop research and stakeholder consultation. Stakeholder consultation was also used to identify potential future change, as were sources such as Local Plan data and the AONB Management Plan where relevant.

## **CONSULTATION**

- 2.18. In addition to close consultation with the Steering Group, a stakeholder consultation workshop was held in December 2007 to validate the landscape characterisation and allow opportunity for local input to the study. The stakeholder consultation report is provided at **Appendix 2**.

### 3. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

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- 3.1. This chapter sets out the national and regional landscape character context for Waveney District. The study nests within this national and regional framework. The Landscape Character Assessment for Waveney District has taken account of the nationally designated landscapes which lie partly within the District, notably the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads (National Park) and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. The management plans and initiatives for these nationally designated landscapes, a short summary of which is set out below, have also informed this study.

#### **The Broads Plan (Management Plan for the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads)**

- 3.2. The vision for the Broads as set out in the Broads Plan reflects their significance as a naturally functioning wetland ecosystem of international landscape, nature conservation and cultural importance. It sets out guiding principles informing the objectives include sustainability and sustainable development/tourism (navigation), addressing the challenges set by climate change and effective environmental protection of the mosaic of lowland wetland habitats. The Management Plan recognises the significant contribution made by landscape character and cultural assets. A Landscape Character Assessment has also been undertaken for the Broads, which has been taken into account in the preparation of the Landscape Character Assessment of Waveney District.

#### **Suffolk Coast AONB Management Plan, 2008-13**

- 3.3. The Plan highlights the special qualities and landscape characteristics of the Suffolk Coast, with reference to the landscape types identified in the AONB Assessment. The Plan and its Vision recognise the importance of the landscape in terms of natural beauty and also economic and social benefits. The Vision is supported by objectives or milestones considering the landscape in the context of the coast, the Sandlings and the estuarine river valleys, in addition to the impacts of tourism, agriculture, coastal management and climate change. The information set out in the Management Plan has been taken into account in the preparation of this assessment. A Landscape Character Assessment of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB was prepared for the former Countryside Commission in 1993. A landscape typology of Suffolk was subsequently developed (Level 2 LDU's), building on these types.

### **THE NATIONAL/REGIONAL CHARACTER CONTEXT**

- 3.4. The District wide assessment has been prepared within the framework of the former Countryside Agency's (now Natural England) Countryside Character Map of England, an extract of which is shown at **Figure 3.1**.
- 3.5. The landscape of Waveney District is represented at the national/regional level by three Countryside Character Areas. These are:
- JCA 80: The Broads;

- JCA 82: Suffolk Coast and Heaths;
  - JCA 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands.
- 3.6. The study also considers the context provided by the former Countryside Agency's National Landscape Typology (see **Figure 3.2**). This subdivides the regional character areas into more detailed landscape types.

## **COUNTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT – LDU'S**

- 3.7. The draft Suffolk County Landscape Typology has defined broad landscape types equivalent to Level 2 Landscape Descriptive Units or LDUs, organised on thematic lines including landcover, cultural, ecological and natural factors, and areas of settlement. The landscape typology broadly agrees with the classification developed for this study, with the boundaries validated, developed and refined through field survey.





## **THE DISTRICT WIDE ASSESSMENT – THIS STUDY**

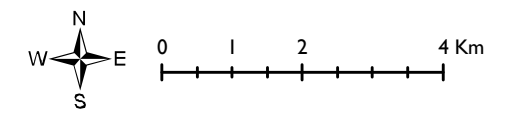
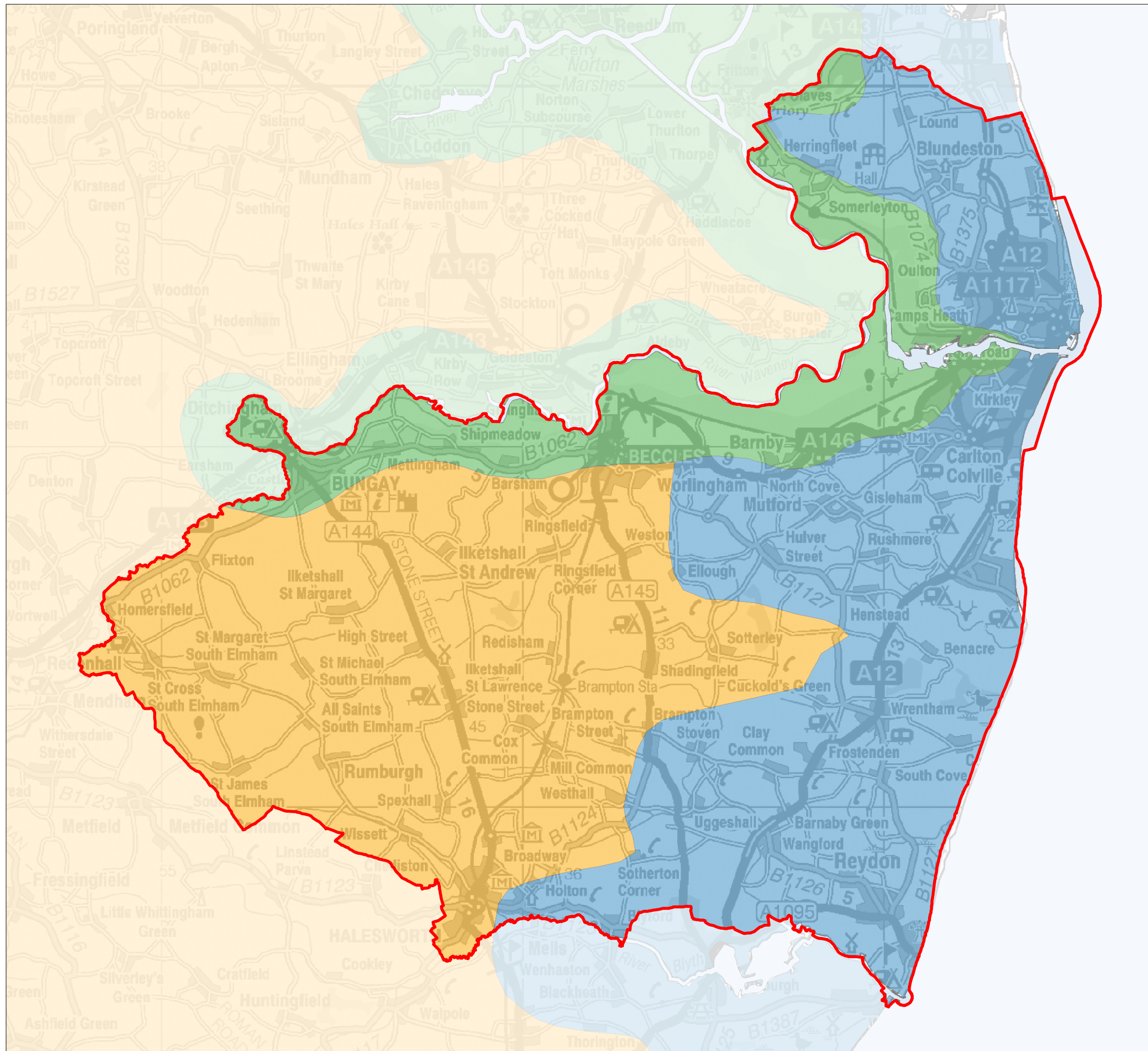
- 3.8. The Waveney District LCA, undertaken at 1:25,000 scale, nests within the national and regional landscape framework, developing and refining the Suffolk County landscape typology, with reference to other baseline data/GIS datasets including topographic information, geology data, HLC and historic mapping, to produce a classification appropriate to a local authority scale assessment.
- 3.9. In preparing the landscape classification, the study has noted the relationship with completed and ongoing landscape character assessment work within adjoining authorities, notably South Norfolk District and the Broads Authority. The aim has been to ensure, as far as possible, a seamless classification across administrative borders. As noted above, the study has been prepared in parallel with the Landscape Character Assessment for Great Yarmouth Borough, which has also been undertaken by Land Use Consultants. Cross boundary relationships across the two authorities have been noted in the relevant character area descriptions.

# Waveney District LCA

## Figure 3.1 Joint Character Areas

### Key

-  Waveney District boundary
- Joint Character Areas**
-  South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands
-  Suffolk Coast and Heaths
-  The Broads



Source: Natural England and Ordnance Survey

Date: 04/01/2008

Revision:






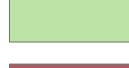





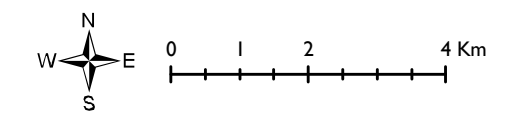
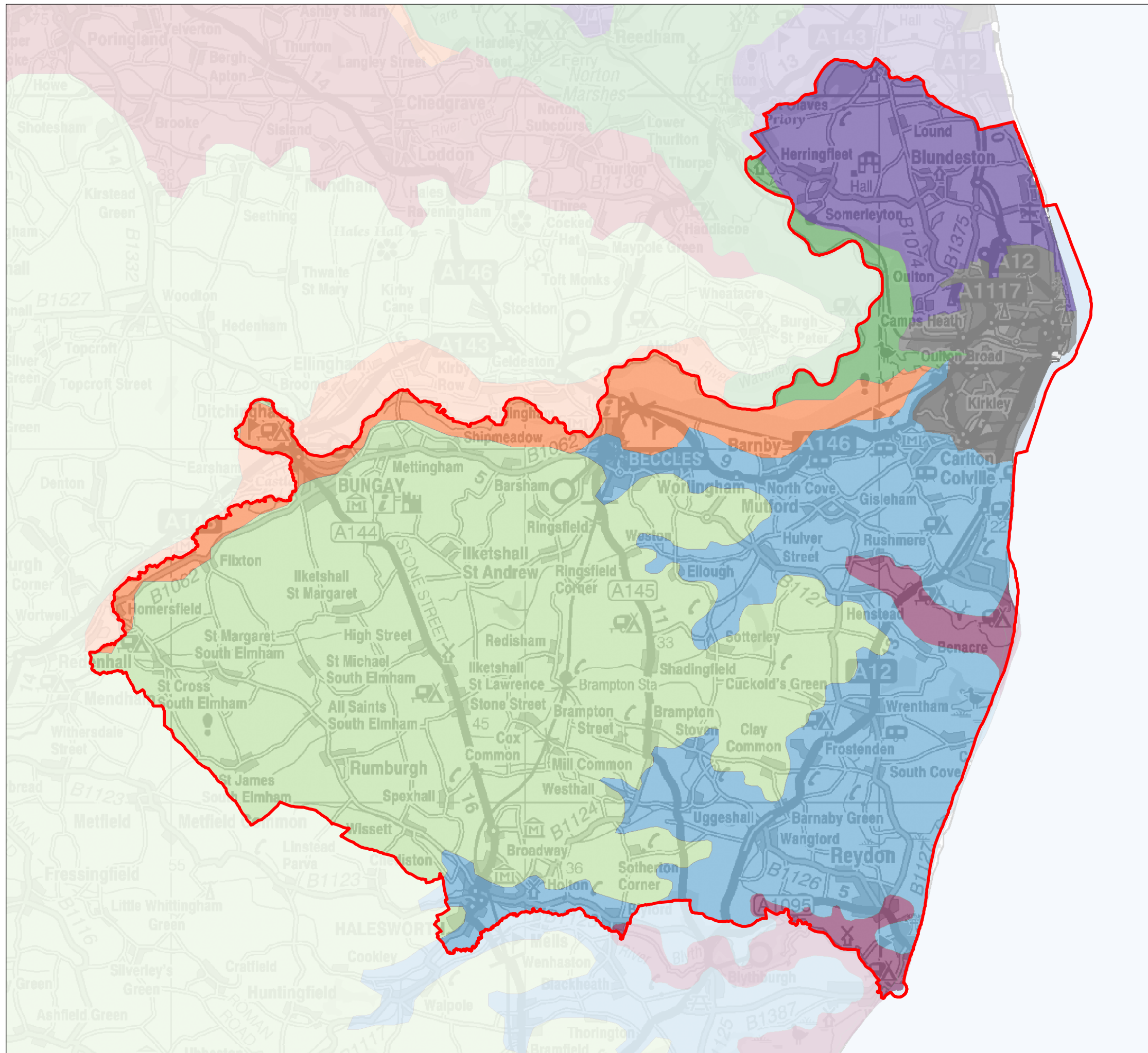


# Waveney District LCA

Figure 3.2 National Landscape Typology

## Key

-  Waveney District boundary
- National Landscape Typology**
-  Lowlands, Wetland, Unsettled/open land
-  Lowlands, Wetland, Wooded - secondary
-  Lowlands, Wetland, Wetland/waste unwooded
-  Intermediate, Other Light Land, Dispersed unwooded
-  Intermediate, Clayland, Wooded - ancient woods
-  Intermediate, Clayland, Wooded - estateland
-  Intermediate, Dispersed unwooded, Wooded - secondary
-  Urban



Source: Natural England and Ordnance Survey

Date: 07/01/2008

Revision:







## 4. PHYSICAL INFLUENCES AND ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

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- 4.1. The landscape of Waveney District has evolved in response to the basic underlying geological characteristics of the land upon which natural processes and human activities have operated in turn influencing patterns of land use as well as ecological and cultural character.
- 4.2. Waveney District is underlain by Craggs, most notably Norwich Craggs which is largely covered with glacial drift deposits. The solid and drift geology of Waveney District is illustrated in **Figure 4.1** and topography in **Figure 4.2**.

### GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.3. The landscape of Waveney District has evolved as a result of an interaction of the physical structure of the landscape and the vegetation and land uses that cover it. To understand what makes a place distinctive, it is useful to identify the key physical influences that have shaped the landscape over time.
- 4.4. The basic structure of the landscape is fundamentally influenced by its underlying rocks and relief. Geology and the processes of weathering, erosion and deposition influence the shape and form of the landscape, its drainage pattern and the mosaic of soil types. In turn, these influence patterns of vegetation and land use.
- 4.5. The underlying bedrock of the entire district is Crag, which was deposited during the Pliocene period between 3.7 and 1.8 million years ago. The bedrock is visible in the low coastal cliffs of soft, weathered and erosion prone rock where the landscapes of Waveney District meet the North Sea.
- 4.6. The bedrock is overlain with drift deposits of glacial sands and gravel, boulder clay, tills (tough grey sandy boulder clays- containing chalk flint, schist, gneiss and igneous rocks), alluvium, head (solifluxion) deposits and areas of peat within the estuaries and river valleys.
- 4.7. Many of the processes which shaped the Waveney landscape are linked to glaciations that occurred during the Pleistocene (1.8 million to 10,000 years ago). Four glacial episodes, which followed each other in close succession, shaped the present landscape of the East of England. The continuing process of ice sheets covering the area, melting, retreating, warming then cooling again as a build up to the next ice age resulted in drastic climatic changes where periods of intense cold were followed by milder almost Mediterranean temperatures. The associated changes in sea level resulted in different phases of drift deposition and erosion.
- 4.8. During the Pleistocene the western and northern parts of the area were covered more than once by ice sheets. As the ice moved over the area they displaced and transported materials. The second glacial period, the Anglian, had a significant impact upon the landscape of Waveney, notably to the west. It was during this period that Boulder Clay (also known as Lowestoft Till or Diamicton) was deposited over the Craggs.

- 4.9. When the Anglian Ice Sheet melted, great torrents of water flowed from beneath the ice sheet and scoured deep channels in the drift and underlying Crag. Following the retreat of the ice sheet, these channels subsequently filled with glacial drift material to form the broad, shallow river valleys (such as the Waveney and Blyth) extant today.
- 4.10. Soils are typically sandy and gravelly and associated with drift deposits in inland areas. On coastal areas along the eastern edge or 'The Sandlings' drift deposits are either thinly scattered or non-existent leaving the Crag bedrock exposed or thinly capped with sand and gravel, resulting in a distinct landscape of acidic soils and heathy cover. A soft, erosion-prone Crag cliff face is often evident to the coast as at Easton Bavents to the north of Southwold.

## **ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT**

- 4.11. Natural Areas were subdivisions of England identified by Natural England as being unique on the basis of their wildlife, landform, geology, land use and human impact. They provide a way of interpreting the ecological variation of the country in terms of natural features, illustrating the distinction between one area and another. Natural England now uses Joint Character Areas as a basis for subdivision. In the East of England these are broadly similar to the Natural Areas, albeit with some localised boundary variations.
- 4.12. This approach provides a wider context for conservation action. Three principal Natural Areas are located within the Waveney District, notably The East Anglian Plain, Suffolk Coast and Heaths and The Broads.
- 4.13. The East Anglian Plain Natural Area (which broadly corresponds with the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands JCA) is identified as a broadly flat plateau dissected by streams and river valleys, with local topographic variation provided by river valleys such as the Waveney. A strong contrast is created by the open plains and intimate small scale valleys. An underlying chalk solid geology is heavily overlain with boulder clay through which the river valleys were carved by glacial meltwater. It stretches into the District from the west and covers most of the District before meeting the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths towards the east where drift deposits change to a sandier composition.
- 4.14. Arable agriculture is the dominant land use within the natural area, although hedges, isolated trees and woods (including many scattered ancient woodlands) create a wooded character in the southern part of the natural area. An irregular field pattern is still apparent in areas, in spite of 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification and associated boundary loss.
- 4.15. The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Natural Area, known locally as 'The Sandlings', and which broadly corresponds to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths JCA, stretches the entire length of the District extending inland as far as Beccles in the North and Halesworth in the South, reaching almost as far as Great Yarmouth in the north east. It is underlain by free draining soils composed of sands and gravels. Large areas of lowland heath, grazing marsh and reed beds combine with areas of arable farmland within inland areas and are bound by long shingle beaches and eroding sand and gravel cliffs. Grazing is of particular importance to the management of the heathland

flora in order to prevent the area reverting to its original woodland state. SSSI designated sites include the coastline from Pakefield to Easton Bavents towards the south of the District.

- 4.16. The Broads Natural Area (which broadly corresponds to the Broads JCA) stretches along the northern boundary of the District following the River Waveney and its associated valley and tributaries. Described as being a large wetland complex shaped mainly by river valleys and tributaries The Broads are characterised by low lying land and associated floodplains, fens, marshes and ronds and are underlain by Crags formed of shelly, muddy, sandy deposits. Peat digging during the Middle Ages created the shallow lakes or Broads that exist today. The Broads Natural Area is internationally recognised for a variety of habitats (including European, National and local nature conservation designations).

## **KEY COUNTYWIDE ECOLOGICAL HABITATS**

- 4.17. A number of priority habitats and species are identified within the individual component action plans of the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan. These include ancient and or species rich hedgerows, coastal floodplain and grazing marsh, coastal sand dunes, coastal vegetated shingle, lowland heathland, fens, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, maritime cliffs and slopes, mudflats, reedbeds and saline lagoons/saltmarsh.
- 4.18. Along the coast are shingle beaches and the associated vegetated shingle habitats of which 20% of the national resource is found in Suffolk. Shingle beaches support rare perennial vegetation and are important for a nationally scarce moss, *Campylium polygamum*. Other flora such as heathers and heaths as well as fauna such as Nightjar, woodlark, stonechat, tree pipit, stone-curlew, Dartford warbler and the Silver studded blue butterfly, grayling butterfly, ant-lion, common lizard and adder are notable. Such areas are under increasing threat due to continued coastal erosion.

Source: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/14EC969E-CD05-4D9D-A018-A831FA768B6A/0/coastalvegshingle.pdf>

- 4.19. The East of England Biodiversity Mapping Project prepared for the East of England Biodiversity Forum (Land Use Consultants and Terra Consult, 2005) identifies much of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths, the estuaries and the valleys as a Core Habitat Area, with opportunities for buffering fragmented habitats in the adjacent landscapes. The East of England Biodiversity Map is included within the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy and therefore is a planning consideration.

## **ECOLOGICAL NETWORK (ECONET) MAPPING PROJECT**

- 4.20. The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership has prepared an indicative Ecological Network Map of Norfolk, which also covers parts of Waveney District, with the aim being to protect and enhance the wildlife resource through appropriate and sensitive management and habitat creation to restore connectivity/create a linked series of sites. This project identified a series of Core Areas, which represent dense concentrations of high quality extant habitat. In addition the Project has identified enhancement areas for heathland, grassland and woodland creation, to add to

priorities and objectives for habitat creation and restoration. These broad areas are shown at **Figure 4.3**, with the Nature Conservation Designations at **Figure 4.4**.

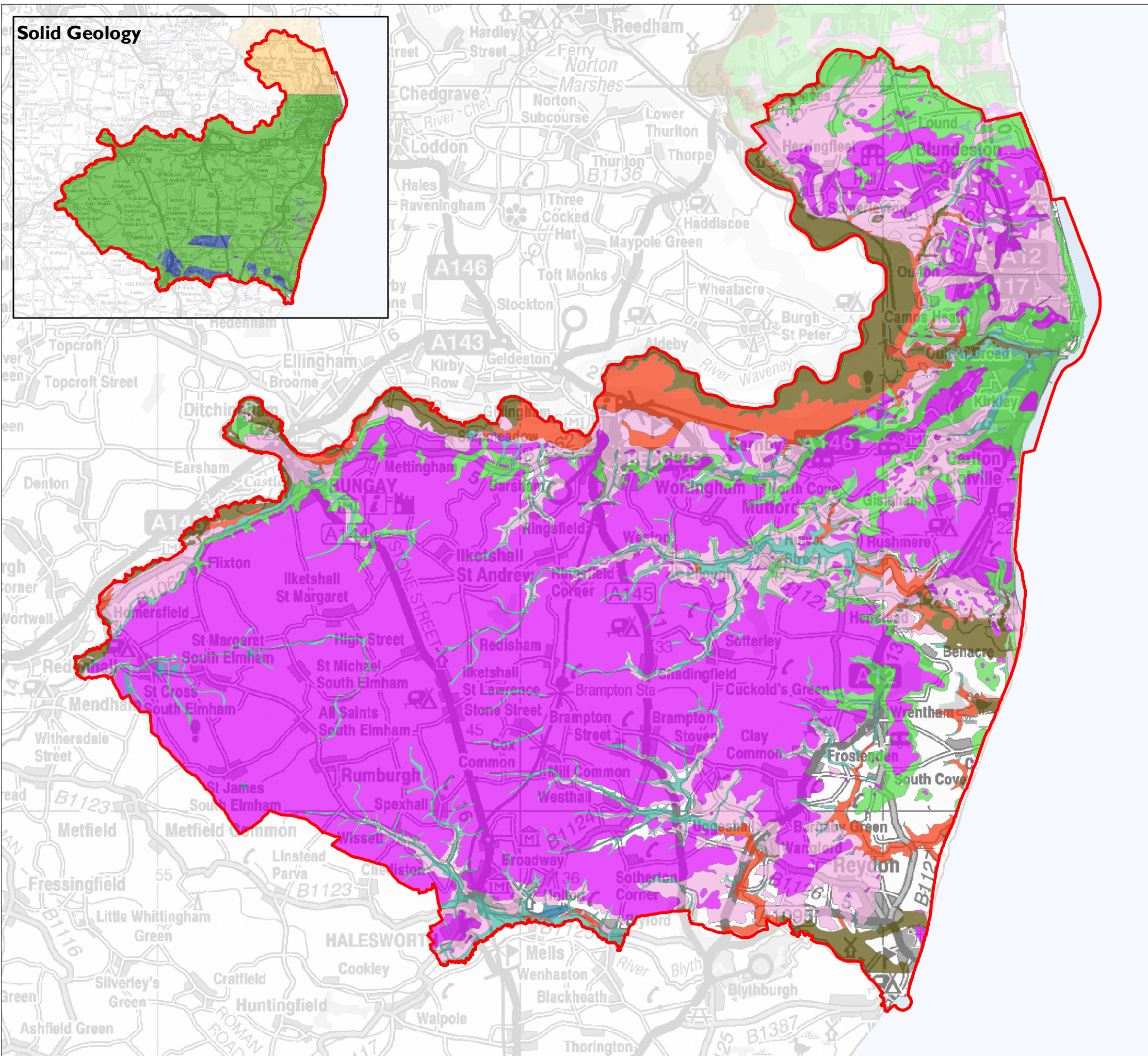
- 4.21. Strategic objectives for landscape management have been identified for the respective character areas within the LCA, partly informed by the objectives set out within the Ecological Network Mapping Project. The primary objective has been to ensure an integrated and holistic approach to landscape planning which takes account not only of designated sites but also habitats in decline and opportunities for future habitat creation in planning for future land management, and in enabling the delivery of the objectives/targets of both the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Ecological Network Mapping Project.

## **HEATHLAND OPPORTUNITY MAPPING**

- 4.22. The East of England Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project began in July 2003 when a partnership comprising of English Nature, Forest Enterprise, Forestry Commission and the Royal Society for the Project of Birds (RSPB) recognised the need to identify priority areas for heathland recreation within the region.
- 4.23. Developed as a GIS based tool it takes into account environmental, social and economic factors to identify priority areas which are pivotal in recreating heathland landscapes. The Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project aims to “demonstrate where heathland re-recreation can contribute to sustainability aspirations of stakeholders across the region and to establish where resources and efforts to re-create heathlands are best targeted.” Sites are scored based on their proximity to existing heathland site and the desirability of creating new heathlands. Within Waveney District broad areas for heathland creation opportunities are potentially identified north-south across the North Suffolk Sandlings Character Area, extending as far north as Benacre and in an east – west direction between Southwold and Brampton.

Source: <http://www.eastspace.net/heathland/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=2630>



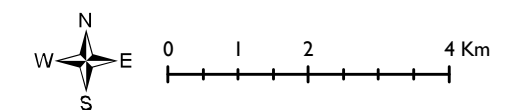


# Waveney District LCA

Figure 4.1 Drift and Solid Geology

## Key

- Waveney District boundary
- Drift geology**
- Clay and silt
- Clay, silt, sand and gravel
- Diamicton
- Gravel, silt, sand and clay
- Peat
- Sand
- Sand and gravel
- Solid geology (see inset map)**
- Silt and clay
- Sand
- Sand and gravel
- Gravel



Source: Natural England and Ordnance Survey  
 Date: 29/01/2008  
 Revision:








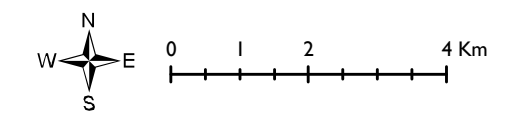
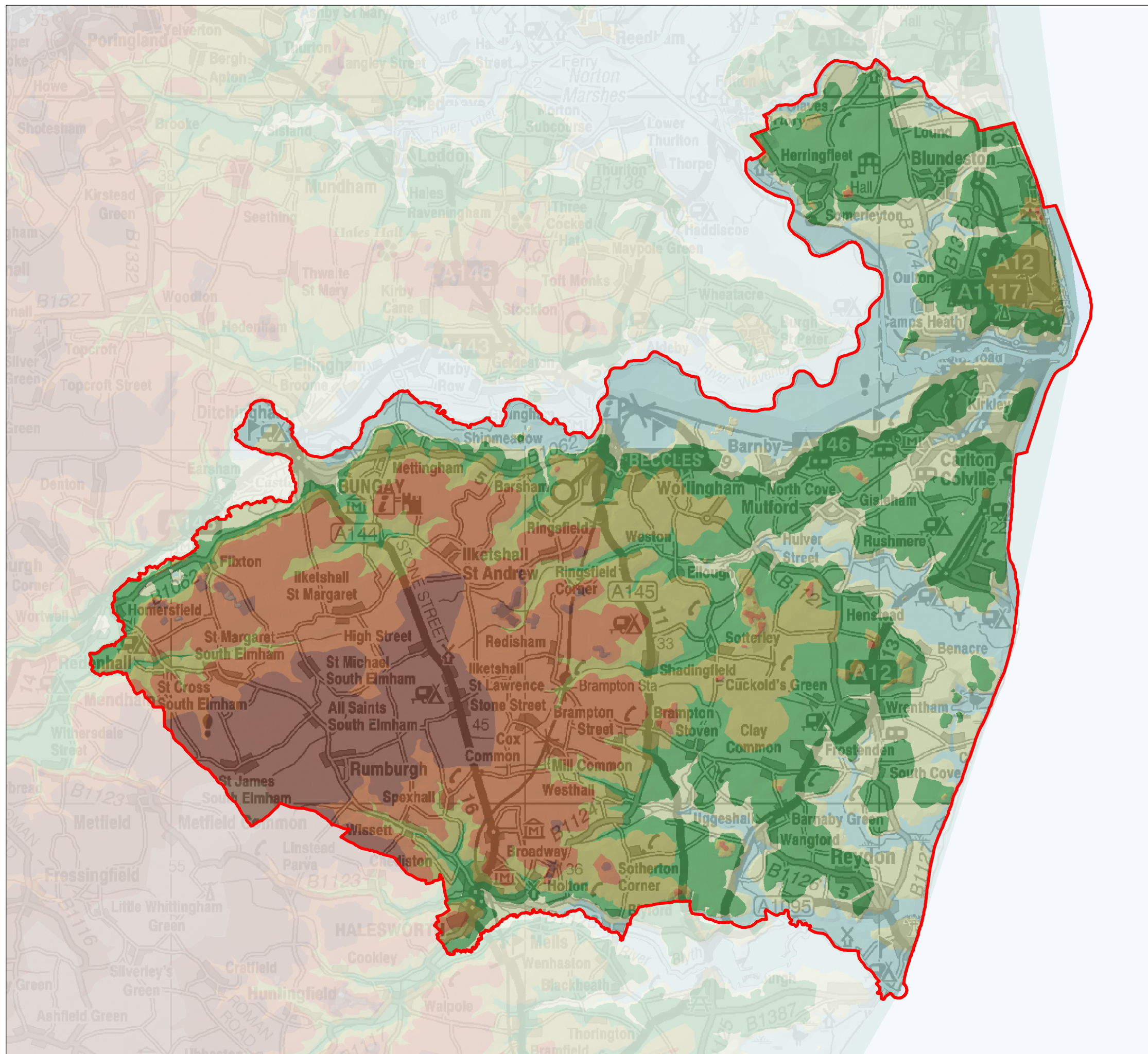
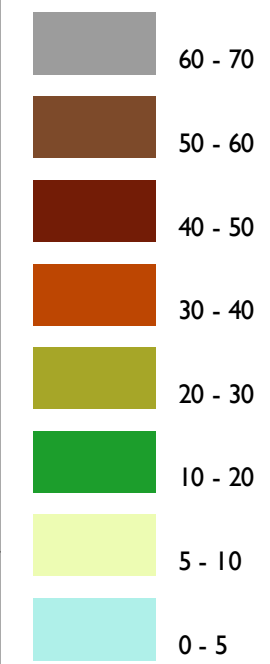
# Waveney District LCA

## Figure 4.2 Waveney - Topography

### Key

 Waveney District boundary

### Elevation (Metres)

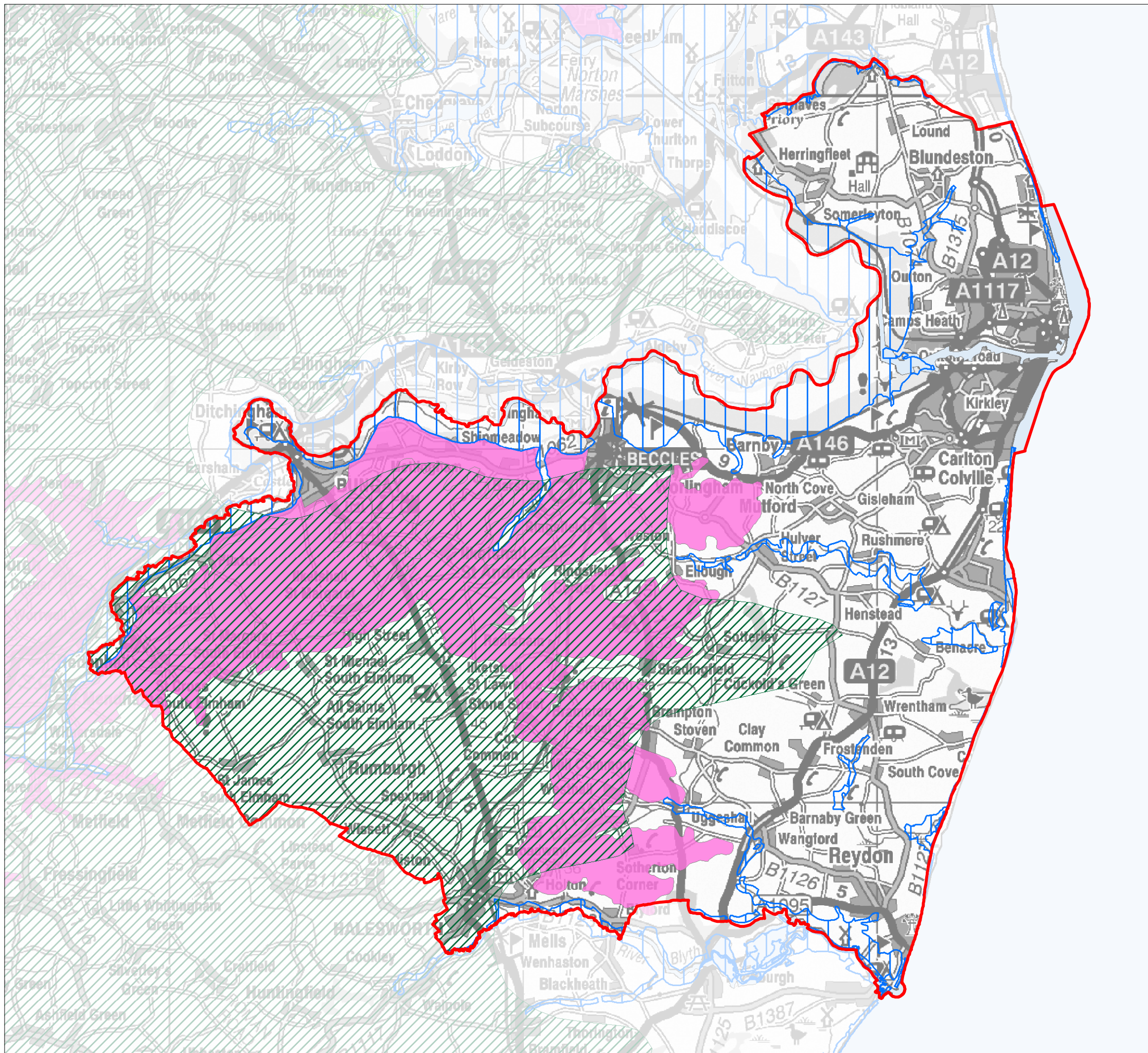


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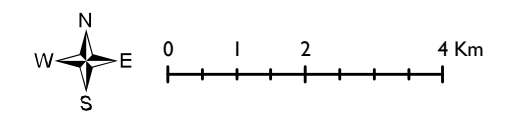


## Waveney District LCA

Figure 4.3 Ecological Network Map

### Key

-  Waveney District boundary
-  Final core areas region
-  General enhancement region
-  Coastal habitat core area region
-  Grassland core area region



Source: Natural England and Ordnance Survey

Date: 07/01/2008

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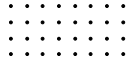



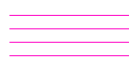

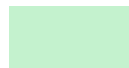


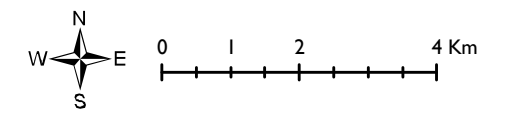
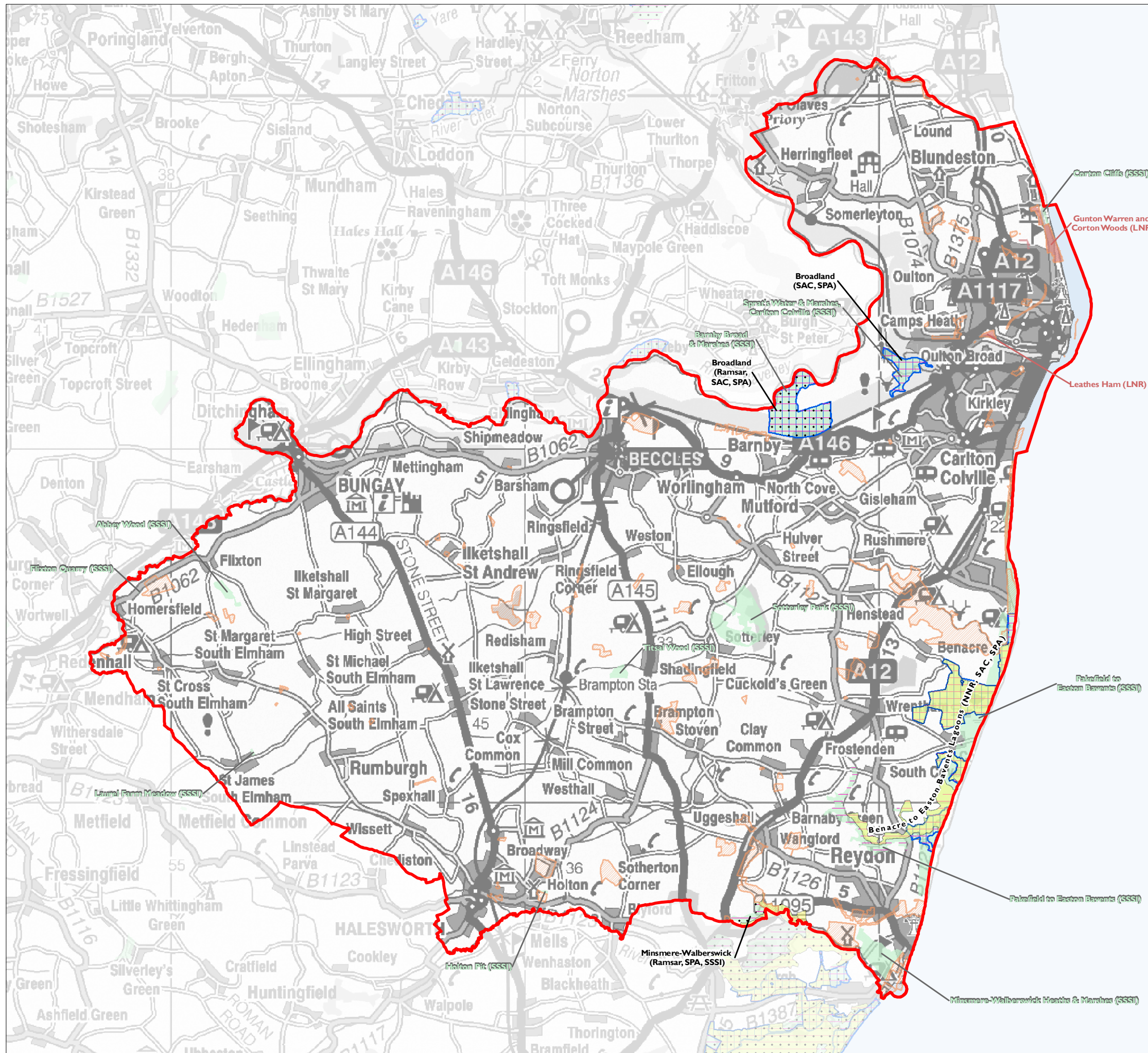


# Waveney District LCA

Figure 4.4 Nature Conservation Designations

## Key

-  Waveney District boundary
-  Ramsar sites
-  County Wildlife Sites
-  National Nature Reserves
-  Local Nature Reserves
-  Special Protection Areas
-  Special Areas of Conservation
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest



Source: Natural England and Ordnance Survey  
 Date: 29/01/2008  
 Revision: B





## 5. HUMAN INFLUENCES

---

### INTRODUCTION

- 5.1. The landscape of Waveney District is the product of the interaction of natural and human or anthropogenic processes. Like most areas of Britain, the landscape of the district bears the imprint of successive periods of human habitation and land use. The following chapter provides a brief summary of the past influences on the landscape of Waveney District. It builds on the human/anthropogenic processes affecting Waveney District as identified in the Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (**Figure 5.1**). The historic designations within the study area are shown at **Figure 5.2**, whilst an extract from Hodskinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk is shown at **Figure 5.3**.

### The Neolithic Period and the Bronze and Iron Ages (c4500 BC to AD43)

- 5.2. After the end of the last glacial episode, pioneer forest of birch and pine covered much of the landscape as the climate grew warmer, with oak woodland being the dominant landcover by circa 5500BC. With the early Neolithic settlement came forest clearance, and the fertile soils of Waveney District were exploited for crop cultivation (primarily wheat and barley). Early settlement was concentrated on higher ground within river valleys such as the Waveney, usually within approximately a mile of watercourses. Scattered pot shards and worked flinted tools such as polished axe heads and worked arrow heads provide evidence of settlement in this era. The flint industry was the earliest major industry in East Anglia, with evidence of extensive production/'factories' and the emergence of an early 'trader' society.
- 5.3. During the Bronze Age settlement was relatively light in distribution, with scattered burial mounds with ring ditches, in addition to evidence of Bronze Age metal workings and hoards. Iron Age settlement was sparser still, with much of the Iron Age tribal activity and settlement concentrated around the Icenic encampments in the Brecklands, in the west of Suffolk and Norfolk.

### The Romano-British and the Anglo Saxon Periods (AD43-1066)

- 5.4. With the Roman Invasion came a scattered pattern of small scale settlement, ranging from villas to more common peasant farmsteads. Whilst agriculture continued to dominate the local economy, pottery was another key industry, with evidence of a pottery kiln at Homersfield. The strategic importance of broad river valleys such as the Waveney is demonstrated by the ruins of the fort at Burgh Castle within the adjoining Great Yarmouth Borough.
- 5.5. The Roman Road pattern, as at Stone Street, would set the template for a distinctive early planned, rectilinear field layout, which would later be altered by piecemeal expansion in the medieval period and as a result of Parliamentary Enclosure in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

- 5.6. In the 'Dark Ages' successive Anglo Saxon settlers continued to use established and managed settlement locations, with areas of habitation concentrated in the river valleys. The primary motivation for this appears to have been agricultural, with use being made of the easily worked, lighter soils and also gravels.
- 5.7. Settlement was often clustered around round towered churches in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century and later, which made extensive use of local flint, although surviving examples were often extensively re worked in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and later. There was comparatively little evidence of monastic foundations and associated settlements in this period, although the enigmatic ruins of the 'Minster' Church at South Elmham, the reputed site of a Saxon Bishophric, signify something of the influence of the church upon the landscape. The town of Beccles was a settlement of Saxon foundation.

### **The Early Medieval Period (1066-1499)**

- 5.8. Following the Norman Conquest and the development of the Feudal System and associated social hierarchy based on the concept of Lordships, a number of castles were built, notably at Bungay and Mettingham. Over the ensuing centuries, with the development of a more peaceful and settled society, castles gave way to 'maisons fortes' - crenellated, fortified manor houses, or 'Great Houses' as at Pakefield Hall and South Elmham Hall. Moated minor houses and farmhouses were also a prominent feature of the early medieval landscape.
- 5.9. A number of religious houses of varying monastic orders (including Augustinian and Benedictine Abbeys and Priors, and Cluniac Priors) were founded within Waveney in this period and their wealth, land ownerships and agricultural management practices had significant expression upon the landscape. Until circa 1350 Waveney was relatively well wooded, although agricultural pressures and demand for land led to the large scale grubbing out of this 'wildwood' and the formative stages of the comparatively sparsely wooded landscape evident today.
- 5.10. Peat cutting and excavation for fuel was a key industry in low lying inland areas in this period and into the post medieval era, necessitating the construction of wind pumps to drain the land both for this purpose and for grazing. When this activity ceased, the peat bogs filled with water, creating the distinctive freshwater 'Broads', which have subsequently silted up in places and become colonised in areas by carrs and wet woodland.
- 5.11. Settlement layout continued the manorial pattern adopted after the conquest, with villages often centred on round towered churches and a central common or large village green, upon which manorial rights such as pannage could be exercised by villagers.

### **Post Medieval Period (1499-1800)**

- 5.12. Primary influences on the landscape in the post medieval period were the result of the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII (1536-40) and associated confiscation of their lands and estates. Early post medieval Enclosure and later Parliamentary Enclosure in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century had marked landscape expression,

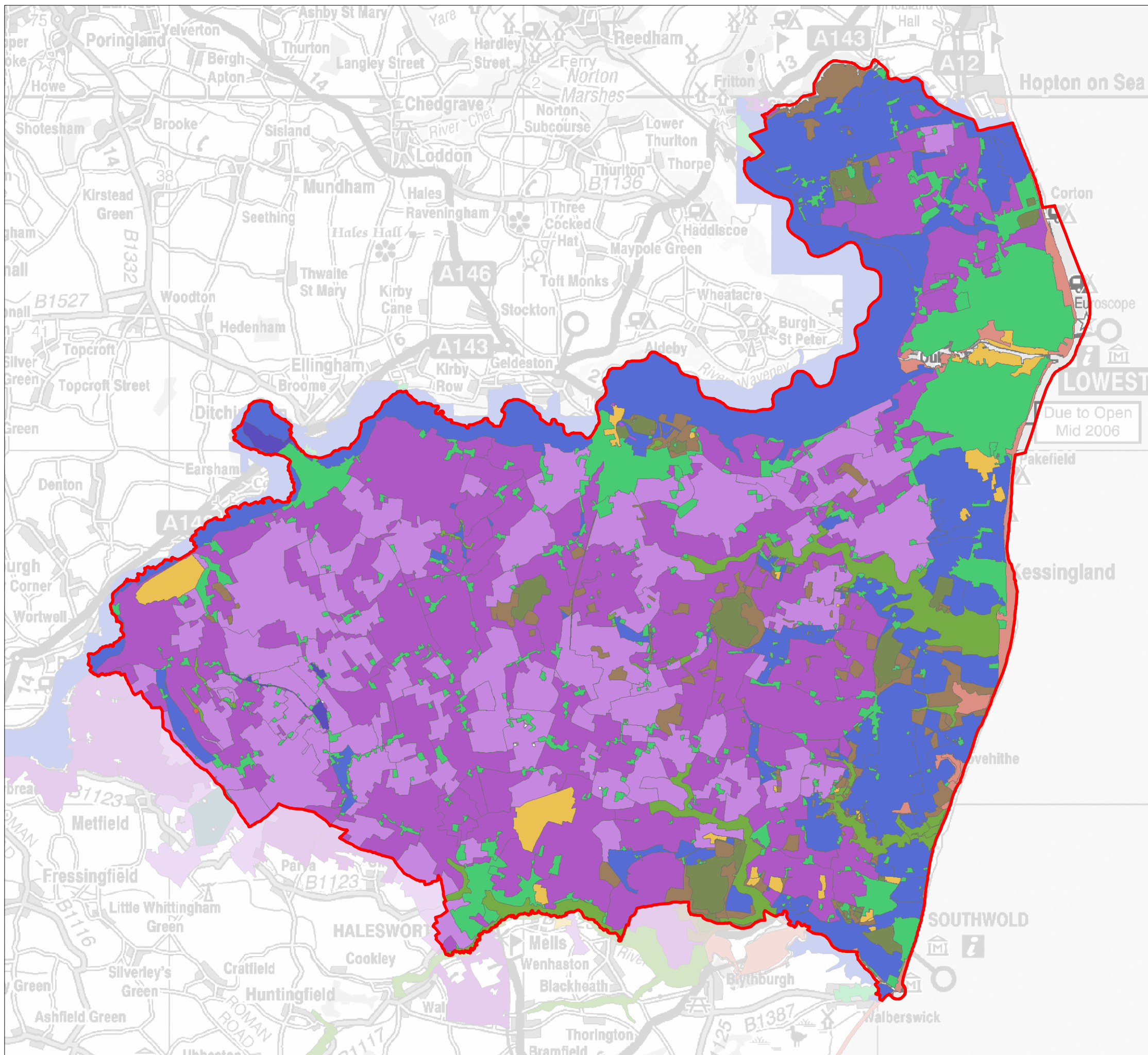
redefining the field and land cover pattern to a significant extent, with a rectilinear, 'co axial' field pattern often evident.

### **Modern Period (1800 to date)**

- 5.13. Primary influences upon the character of the landscape in this period were the continuing pattern of Parliamentary Enclosure and the associated loss of commons and heathland, which continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural practice, principally arable cultivation and attendant boundary loss due to agricultural intensification significantly altered parts of the landscape. However the western part of Waveney District displays a high concentration of intact early Enclosure co axial field boundaries.
- 5.14. Other influences during this period were the low key development of the fishing/harbour village of Southwold as a seaside resort town, and the continued expansion of Lowestoft, both in terms of the docks and associated industry, and the seafront/resort development.
- 5.15. The landscape of Waveney District is continuing to change and evolve in response to social, economic and natural processes. The key challenge for its future is climate change, associated sea level rise and effects on the coastal edge of the District. The future approach to management of agricultural land and accommodation of development pressures will also determine the character of the future landscape. This Landscape Character Assessment establishes what is important about the landscape, and will help to guide and manage future change.





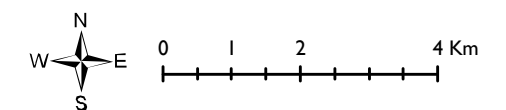


## Waveney District LCA

Figure 5.1 Historic Landscape Characterisation

### Key

- Waveney District boundary
- Historic Landscape Classification
- 18th-century or later enclosure
- Ancient monument
- Built up area
- Common pasture
- Communications
- Horticulture
- Industrial
- Meadow or managed wetland
- Post-1950 agricultural landscape
- Post-medieval military
- Post-medieval park and leisure
- Pre-18th-century enclosure
- Unimproved land
- Woodland



Source: Suffolk County Council and Ordnance Survey

Date: 07/01/2008

Revision:








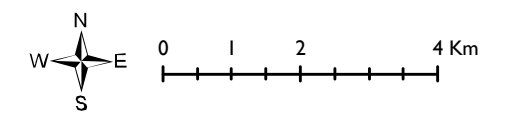
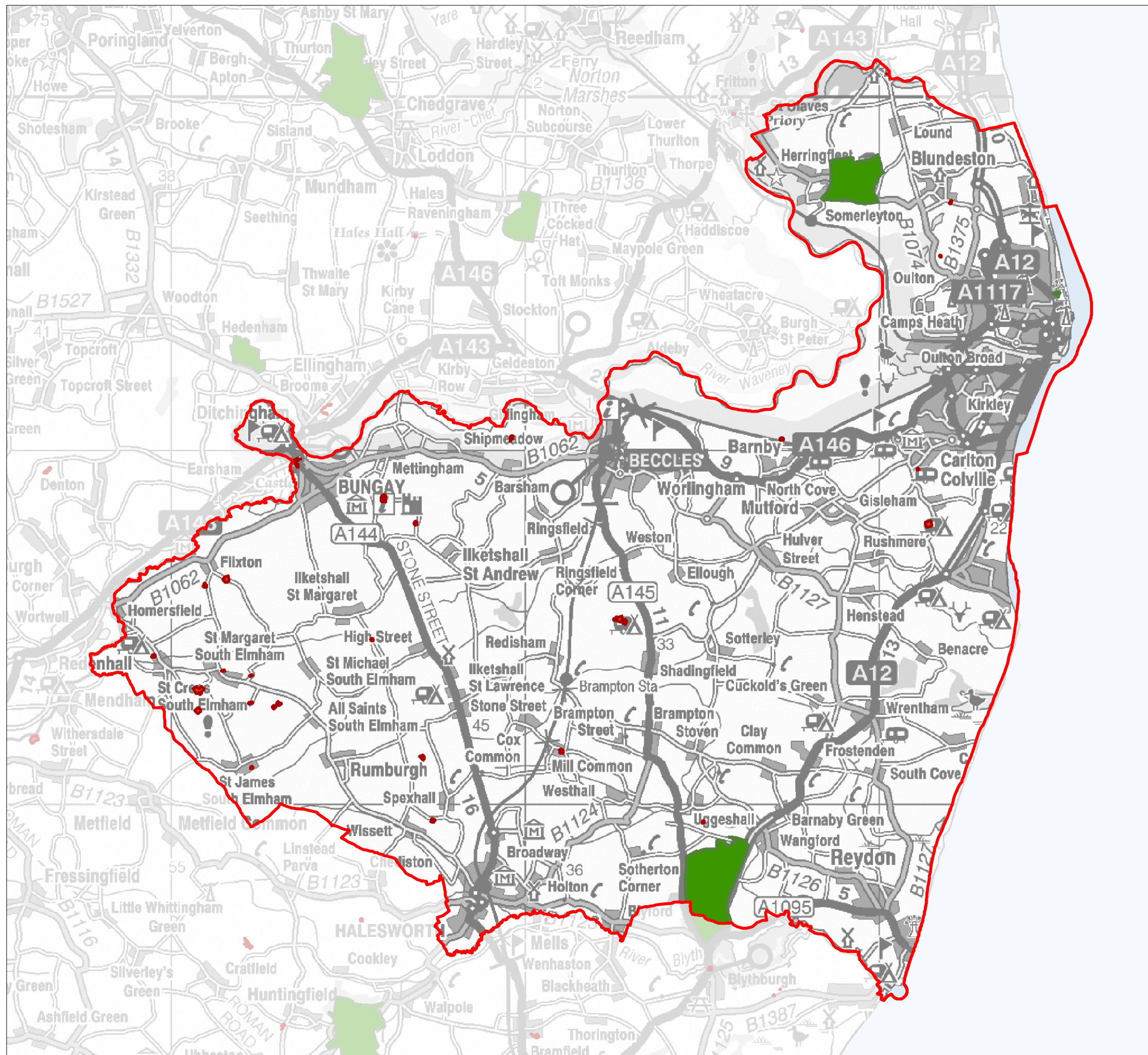


# Waveney District LCA

## Figure 5.2 Historic Designations

### Key

-  Waveney District boundary
-  Historic parkland
-  Scheduled monuments



Source: English Heritage and Ordnance Survey

Date: 07/01/2008

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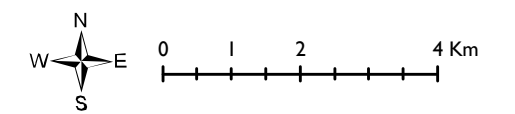


## Waveney District LCA

Figure 5.3 Hodkinson's Map

### Key

 Waveney District boundary



Source: Larks Press  
 Date: 07/01/2008  
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## 6. THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

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### INTRODUCTION

- 6.1. The physical and human influences described in the previous chapters have combined to create the unique and distinctive character of Waveney District. The District is characterised by a variety of landscapes represented by 10 landscape types.

#### Landscape Types

A: Rural Wooded Valley

B: Rural River Valley

C: Broads River Valley\*

D: Coastal Broads and Marshes

E: Dunes, Coastal Levels and Resorts

F: Coastal Cliffs

G: Settled Farmland

H: Tributary Valley Farmland

I: Farmed Plateau Clayland

J: Estuarine Marsh

K: Sandlings

\*Type C relates only to Great Yarmouth Borough.

- 6.2. Each of the generic landscape types has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover and historical evolution. For this District level study the landscape types are further sub-divided into component **landscape character areas**. These are discrete geographical areas that possess the common characteristics described for the landscape type. There are 23 individual character areas within Waveney District, each with a distinct and recognisable identity.
- 6.3. The landscape classification for the District is set out in **Table 6.1** and illustrated at **Figure 6.1**. The figure has been prepared on a Geographic Information System (GIS), with mapping undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000. The table shows all types and character areas for both Waveney District and Great Yarmouth Borough, with areas relating to Waveney in bold and those relating only to Great Yarmouth Borough in italics.

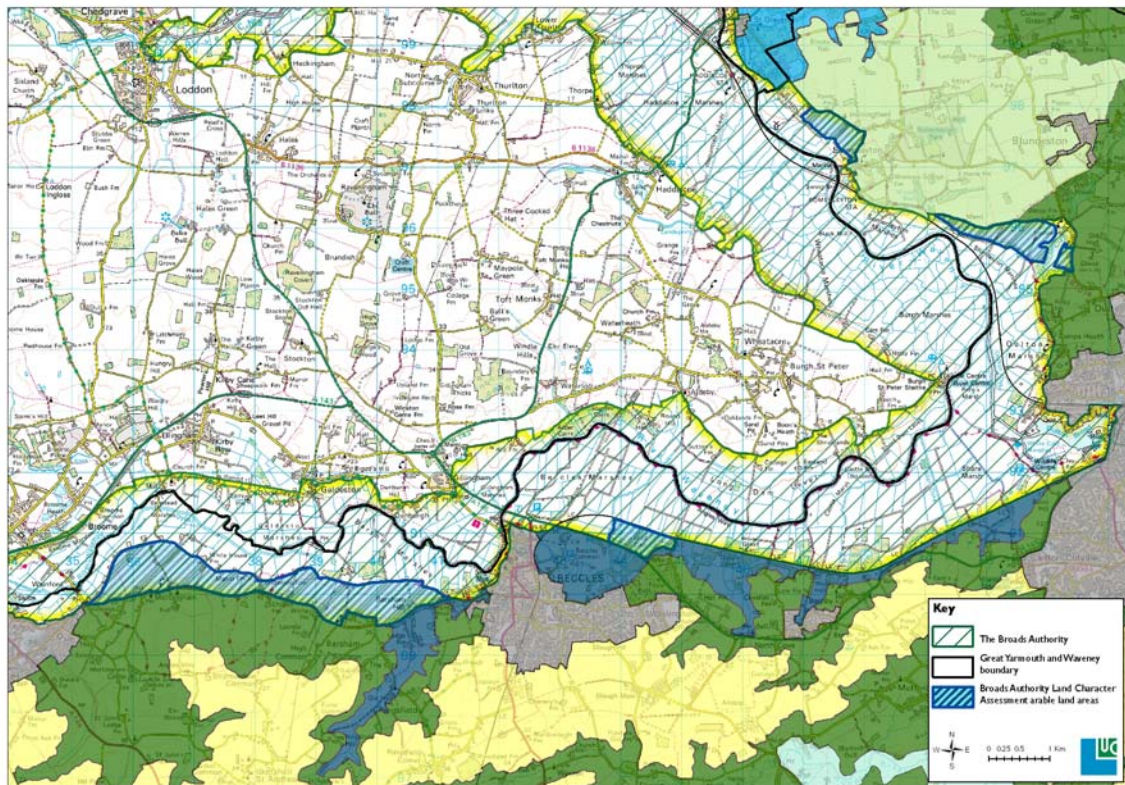
**Table 6.1: Landscape Classification of Waveney District**

<b>Landscape Type A: Rural Wooded Valleys</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>A1</b>	<b>Waveney Wooded Valley</b>
<b>Landscape Type B: Rural River Valleys</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>B1</b>	<b>Waveney Valley</b>
<b>B2</b>	<b>Blyth and Wang Valley</b>
<b>Landscape Type C: Broads River Valley</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<i>C1</i>	<i>Yare Valley – Great Yarmouth Edge</i>
<b>Landscape Type D: Coastal Broads and Marshes</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>D1</b>	<b>Covehithe and Benacre Coastal Broads</b>
<b>Landscape Type E: Dunes, Coastal Levels and Resorts</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<i>E1</i>	<i>Winterton Dunes and Coastal Strip</i>
<b>E2</b>	<b>Great Yarmouth Coastal Strip</b>
<b>Landscape Type F: Coastal Cliffs</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>F1</b>	<b>Pakefield to Benacre Coastal Cliffs</b>
<b>F2</b>	<b>Southwold Coast</b>
<b>Landscape Type G: Settled Farmland</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<i>G1</i>	<i>East Flegg Settled Farmland</i>
<i>G2</i>	<i>West Flegg Settled Farmland</i>
<i>G3</i>	<i>Ormesby and Filby Settled Farmland</i>
<i>G4</i>	<i>Hobland Settled Farmland</i>
<b>G5</b>	<b>Somerleyton Settled Farmland</b>
<b>Landscape Type H: Tributary Valley Farmland</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>H1</b>	<b>Blundeston Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H2</b>	<b>Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland</b>



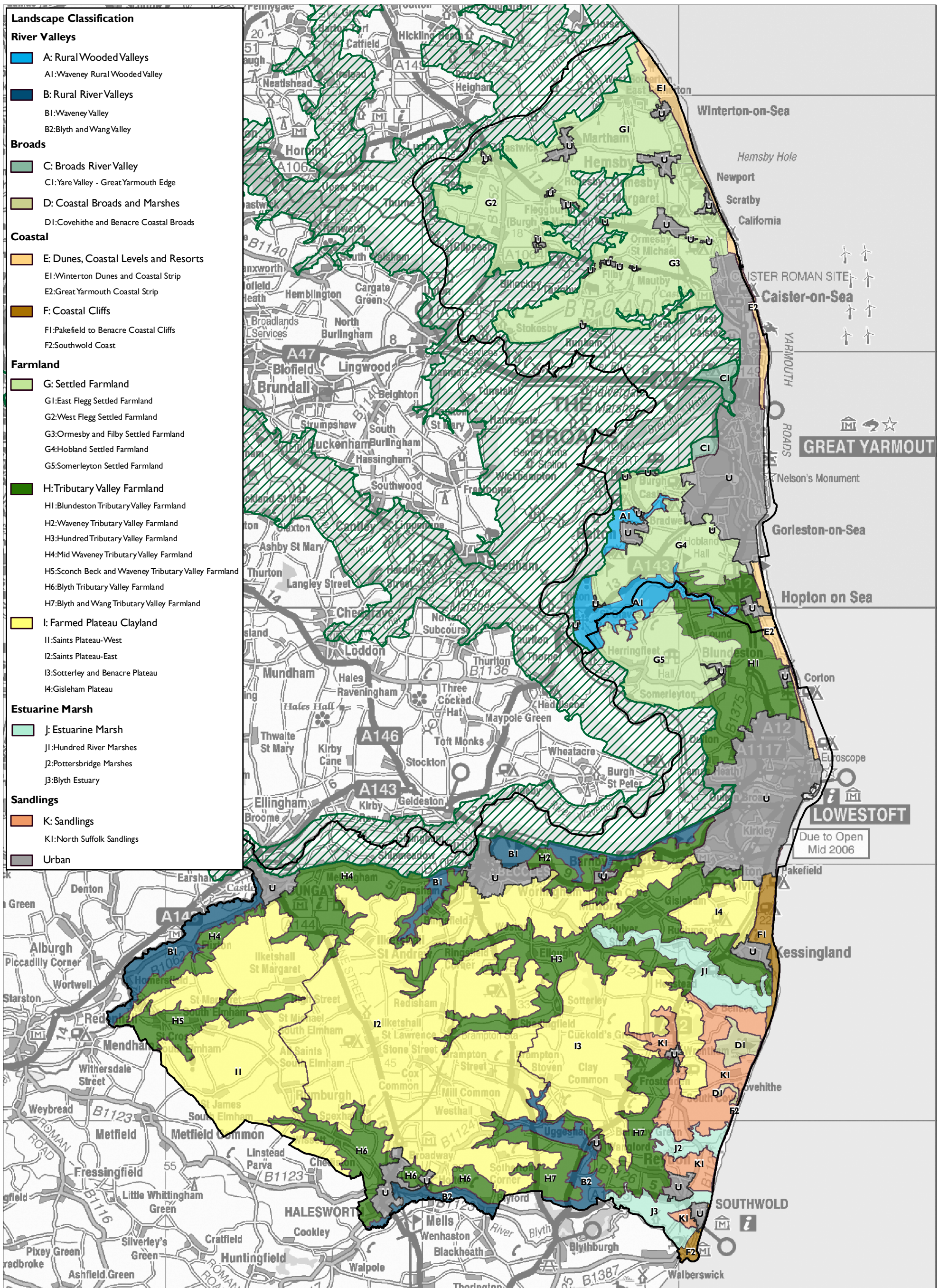
<b>H3</b>	<b>Hundred Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H4</b>	<b>Mid Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H5</b>	<b>Sconch Beck and Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H6</b>	<b>Blyth Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H7</b>	<b>Blyth and Wang Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>Landscape Type I: Farmed Plateau Clayland</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>I1</b>	<b>Saints Plateau - West</b>
<b>I2</b>	<b>Saints Plateau - East</b>
<b>I3</b>	<b>Sotterley and Benacre Plateau</b>
<b>I4</b>	<b>Gisleham Plateau</b>
<b>Landscape Type J: Estuarine Marsh</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>J1</b>	<b>Hundred River Marshes</b>
<b>J2</b>	<b>Pottersbridge Marshes</b>
<b>J3</b>	<b>Blyth Estuary</b>
<b>Landscape Type K: Sandlings</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>K1</b>	<b>North Suffolk Sandlings</b>

- 6.4. The landscape types and individual character areas within Waveney District are set out in the remainder of this chapter, with the relationships with the Landscape Character Assessments for Great Yarmouth Borough and the Broads Authority noted where relevant. The diagram overleaf sets out areas which have been excluded from the Broads Authority Landscape Character Assessment, and which have been reflected in the relevant character area descriptions.



## Areas excluded from the Broads Authority LCA and relationship to Waveney District Character Areas

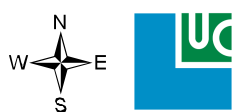




**Great Yarmouth and Waveney LCA**  
**Figure 6.1 Landscape Classification of Great Yarmouth and Waveney**

**Key**  
 [Hatched Box] Great Yarmouth and Waveney boundary  
 [Hatched Box] The Broads Authority

Date: 07/01/2008  
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 Source: Land Use Consultants



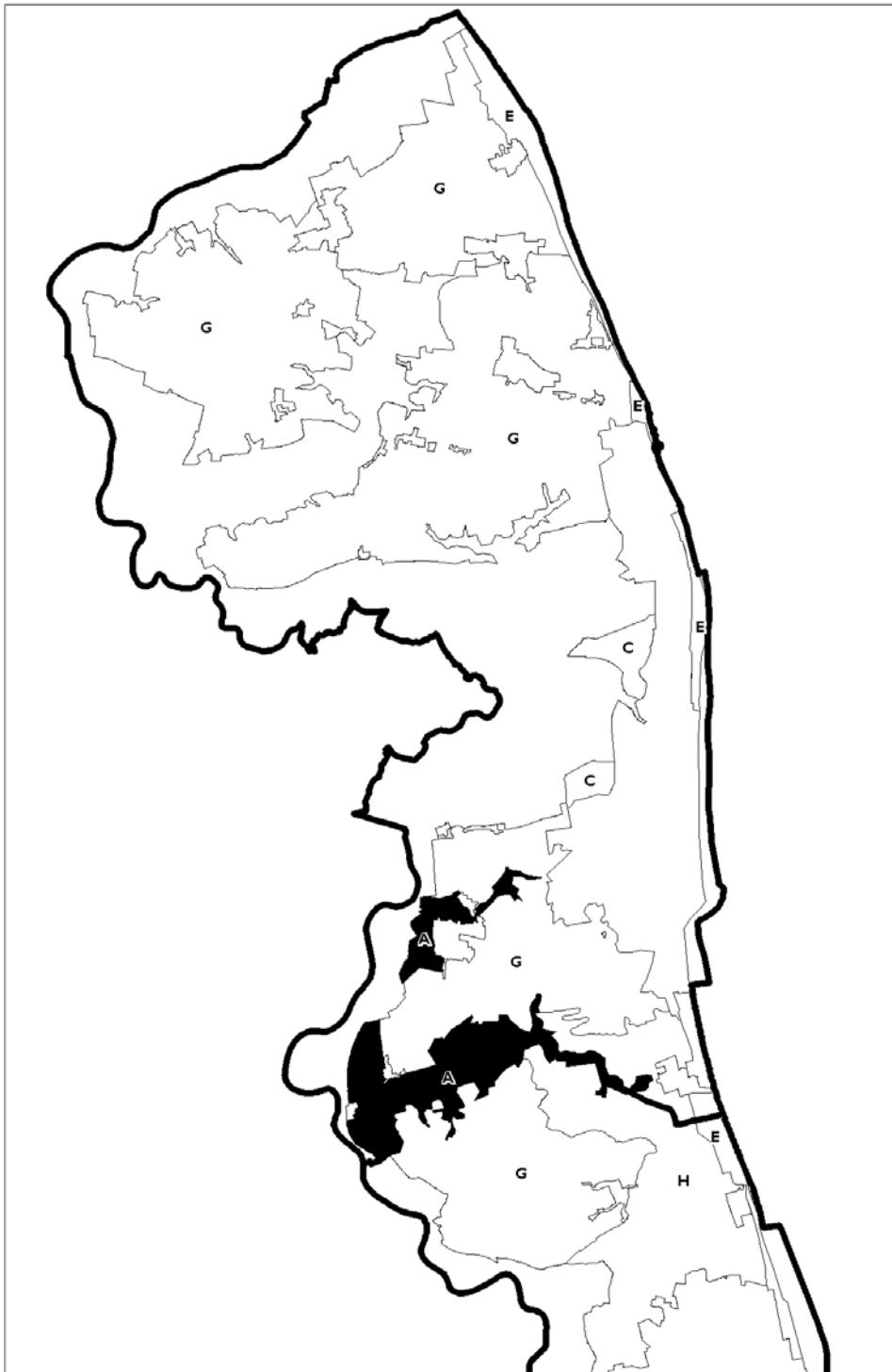
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## A: RURAL WOODED VALLEYS

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- A. This landscape type is represented by a single character area which straddles the boundary between Great Yarmouth Borough and Waveney District, with the

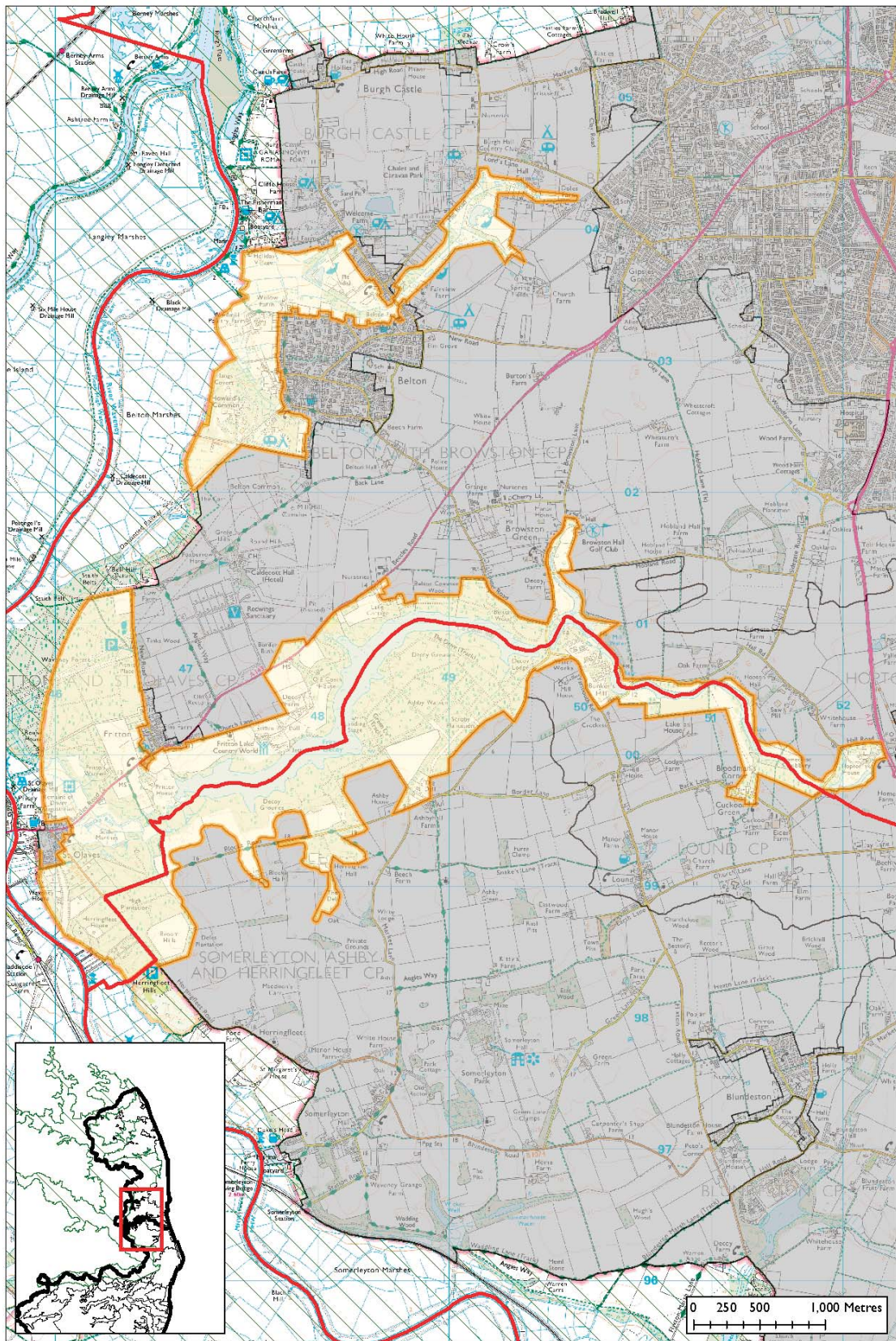
boundaries defined by drift geology and the influence of woodland (both wet woodland and estate/commercial plantation) within the valley floor.

### Key Characteristics

- Crag forms the bedrock and is overlain with drift deposits including peats of Breydon formation and sands and gravels;
- Topography ranges from 5m AOD (valley floors) to 15m AOD (valley crests);
- Deep well drained, sandy soils overlay drift material, often associated with areas of former heathland and commons;
- Dense woodland cover is a characteristic, both in terms of wet woodland and coniferous plantation on the site of former acid heath. Hazel coppice is distinctive;
- Mature woodland cover creates containment, resulting in a landscape of often intimate scale. Small scale areas of pastoral farmland provide localised variation;
- Water bodies created for historic estate uses such as duck decoy ponds are distinctive, albeit largely concealed elements;
- Parkland and estate features including rusticated lodge houses are characteristic features of the cultural landscape;
- Influence of settlement is sparse, being confined to compact hamlets of traditional character and red brick/flint vernacular. Landscape quality is tranquil, with only a limited network of A and B roads apparent;
- An often dark and enclosed character, with an intimate spatial scale, and framed views. The few instances where the large waterbodies are visible create variation in light and reflection.

<b>Landscape Type A: Rural Wooded Valleys</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>AI</b>	<b>Waveney Wooded Valley</b>





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# AI: WAVENEY RURAL WOODED VALLEY

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## Location and Boundaries

- AI.1 *Waveney Rural Wooded Valley* lies to the southern end of Great Yarmouth Borough and straddles the boundary with the adjacent Waveney District, although this description covers the entire area. The boundaries of the character area are defined by the presence of drift geology and the extent of woodland cover within the valley floor and sides, with the valley crests found at 15m AOD. The Blocka Run, a westerly draining tributary of the Waveney, and incorporating a natural broad at Fritton, later used as a decoy pond, lies within the valley floor, as do the Lound Lakes (reservoirs) which supply drinking water to Lowestoft. A minor tributary valley (excluded from the Broads LCA), defined by marshland and areas of carr woodland lies to the north, draining into the river Waveney. As such this small area has also been identified as part of the *Waveney Rural Wooded Valley* area.

## Relationship to the Broads Authority Executive Area

- AI.2 The landscape type partly extends into the adjacent Broads Authority Executive Area. A small part of the Broads Authority area to the west of the character area, containing a block of plantation woodland, is excluded from the Broads LCA and has similar characteristics to the greater part of the area.

## Key Characteristics

- A Crag bedrock geology is overlain with drift deposits including peats of Breydon formation and sands and gravels;
- Landform is that of a broad, shallow valley. Topography ranges from 5m AOD in the valley floor to 15m AOD to the valley crests;
- The drift geology is overlain with deep, well drained loamy and sandy soils, which are often prone to erosion, and acidic where associated with former heathland and commons;
- A densely wooded valley landscape, with oak woodland fringing and forming part of the Somerleyton Estate, in addition to hazel coppice and extensive areas of coniferous estate plantation;
- Containment is provided by the mature woodland cover, creating a landscape of often intimate scale. Localised variation is provided by small scale areas of pastoral farmland;
- A number of large scale water bodies are apparent on the valley floor, notably the duck decoy ponds at Fritton and smaller scale ornamental pools at Hopton House.
- Blocka Run is a small, westerly draining watercourse in the valley floor, which follows a meandering course to the River Waveney;

- Historic and cultural features are represented by the decoy ponds, the ruins of the Augustinian Priory of St Olaves and by the parkland features associated with the Somerleyton Estate, notably rusticated lodge houses;
- A tranquil, sparsely settled landscape, with the water crossed only intermittently by a network of 'B' Roads and the A143 which traverses the western end of the valley floor;
- The compact, red brick and flint hamlet of St Olaves is the principal settlement within the character area;
- A landscape which is often dark and enclosed in character, with an intimate spatial scale, and framed views. The few instances where the large waterbodies are visible create variation in light and reflection.
- Recreational access includes the Country Park at Fritton Decoy, fisheries and areas of Access Land, although large areas of the valley floor are inaccessible out of season.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- A1.3 Drift deposits such as peats and glaciofluvial drift material such as sands and gravels overlay a Crag bedrock geology. Topography is that of a broad, shallow valley, ranging from 5m AOD within the valley floor to 15m AOD to the valley crests, resulting in a valley landform of subtle definition. The extent of the character area is defined by drift geology deposits which have in turn influenced vegetation and wooded landcover pattern. Peat and silt drift deposits create localised variation with the marshland landscape apparent in the small northern valley.
- A1.4 Principal landcover relates to the former estate influence within the character area, with mature oak woodland at Fritton Old Hall. Hazel coppice and areas of rhododendron dominated understorey are also apparent as are blocks of coniferous plantation.
- A1.5 Localised landcover variation is created by small scale pastoral fields and parkland grassland at Fritton Old Hall, together with some arable fields on the valley sides.
- A1.6 Large scale waterbodies within the valley floor are a notable landscape feature, e.g. the decoy pond at Fritton, created by damming the Blocka Run (a minor stream following a westerly draining course into the Waveney). Small scale ornamental ponds are evident at Hopton House, in addition to fisheries on former mineral extraction sites in the narrow wooded valley fingers which thread through the adjacent *Hobland Settled Farmland* Character Area.
- A1.7 A number of large ponds and fishing lakes are apparent to the floor of the small northern valley.
- A1.8 The ecological interest of parts of the character area is recognised in the Ecological Network Mapping Project's creation of a wetland habitat zone which fringes much of

the decoy pond and associated waterbodies within the character area. The majority of the valley falls within a Core Area, representing a significant concentration of high quality extant habitat. Opportunities for heathland creation are identified within areas of plantation woodland by the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project.

### **Historic Character**

- AI.9 The Norfolk and Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have influenced the character of the landscape. These include 18<sup>th</sup> century and later Enclosure and areas of 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century plantation woodland on former commonland and heathland at Fritton Old Hall. In addition area of regenerated alder carr woodland are also apparent within the valley floor, associated with the decline in traditional pastoral management. 19<sup>th</sup> Century land drainage and reclamation of parts of the transitional landscape adjacent to the Broads has also had an effect on the present landscape character.
- AI.10 Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk identifies extensive areas of common land and heath at Fritton and also at Herringfleet and Ashby Warren, although these have subsequently been lost to areas of estate plantation. The natural broad at Fritton is identified as a duck Decoy Pond (a pond constructed for the purposes of attracting ducks for food and hunting) on the 1797 Map.
- AI.11 Principal extant elements of the historic landscape character are the stuccoed minor hall house at Fritton Old Hall, which forms part of the Somerleyton Estate, and the flint, round towered estate church, in addition to a number of estate buildings or 'cottages ornees' built in a rusticated 'Gothick' style. The remains of St Olaves Priory, including some of the claustral buildings, are another historic feature of the landscape at the westernmost edge of the character area where it adjoins the Broads Authority.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- AI.12 This is a sparsely settled estate landscape associated with the wooded valley and the waterbodies of the Somerleyton Estate. As such the influence of settlement is relatively light, with built form confined to estate buildings and lodges, in addition to the minor estate village of Fritton and the linear Hamlet of St Olaves. Within St Olaves vernacular character is represented by red brick and flint with buildings from the late medieval and pre 19<sup>th</sup> Century periods all evident, in addition to the flint ruins of the cloisters at St Olaves Priory. A number of minor rural roads traverse the valley floor, in addition to the A143 Beccles Road to the western end of the character area.
- AI.13 A number of more recent buildings are also apparent, associated with the recreational use of Fritton Decoy as part of Fritton Lake Country Park, notably the large timber shed/barn housing the visitor centre and the associated close board perimeter fence. Fritton Old Hall is now an hotel.
- AI.14 A more settled character is evident to the fringes of the small northern valley, with ribbon development apparent to the lanes which fringe this area, in addition to chalet and caravan parks and camp sites.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- A.I.15 Dense plantation woodland creates a contained landscape of often intimate scale and spatial quality. The skyline is frequently formed by the stark silhouettes of coniferous woodlands although localised variation in vegetation density and the effect of light is created by areas of coppiced deciduous woodland. This is enhanced by seasonal variations such as leafing out and the winter tracery of deciduous tree branches. Areas of pasture, parkland grassland, coppice and dense parkland planting create a colourful landscape of considerable textural variety.
- AI.16 Further variation in the perceptual character of the landscape results from the presence of the large water body at Fritton Decoy, which creates contrast in the spatial experience through reflected light and shade. Glimpses of the water create a element of surprise and additional visual interest in a predominantly dark, enclosed landscape, although these are relatively scarce due to the density of planting and the close board fencing around parts of the Country Park boundary.
- AI.17 Localised variation is created as the landscape opens out into the broad, flat Waveney Valley to the west of St Olaves. As such the area forms part of the setting of the broads, although intervisibility with this landscape is limited due to the extent of woodland cover. This is a dark, small scale and sparsely settled, tranquil landscape, with the exception of the localised interruption created by the A143 road corridor.
- AI.18 The remoteness of the landscape is very much dependent upon the seasonal nature of the use of the Country Park at Fritton Decoy. Tranquil and peaceful out of season, the landscape is different in character during the holiday season, although the water here and the reach of the Waveney at St Olaves is still significantly quieter than other parts of the Broad.

## **EVALUATION**

- AI.19 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Area of semi natural and coppice woodland, which indicate historic land management and provide opportunities for habitat;
- Decoy ponds and associated marginal vegetation, which provide further habitat variety, interest and a sense of historic character;
- Estate architecture, including 'cottages ornees', which illustrate the historic vernacular and links to the Somerleyton Estate;
- Plantation woodland, which indicates the estate identity and character of the landscape;
- Relatively sparsely settled, tranquil character.

## **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

AI.20 Key visual sensitivities are the wooded skylines which provide a sense of containment and an intimate spatial scale, in addition to heavily framed views. Due to the containment afforded by structural vegetation, intervisibility with the valley sides and with other character areas is limited, and there are few views into the valley from adjacent areas.

## **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

AI.21 This is a landscape of varied elements, with a strong estate character. It is in a managed condition, with evidence of woodland management to fulfil different cover and screening functions. The ecological quality and value of the riparian elements within the area is recognised by the creation of a wetland habitat zone within EcoNet and the status of the valley floor as a habitat Core Area. Insensitive boundary treatments are apparent in places, with the close board fencing and large shed at Fritton Lake Country Park.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Management of the adjacent Broads for peat extraction, which has affected the historic landscape character to the fringes of the area;
- Emparking of the land as part of the Somerleyton Estate and construction of associated landscape features such as the duck decoy pond;
- Loss of waterside commons and heaths to areas of commercial/estate plantation;
- Parkland planting including rhododendrons within the valley floor;
- Development of camping and caravan parks to the fringe of the northern valley;
- Creation of the Country Park and associated water sports/recreational provision and infrastructure such as log cabins/accommodation.

### ***Potential Future Change***

AI.22 Potential future change may arise through recreational uses and pressures associated with the Country Park, in addition to the potential to increase access to areas of the valley floor, which is currently limited. Fluctuating water levels within the floodplain in light of climate change may also be an issue, as may flood management and storage needs.

## **Strategic Objectives**

AI.23 **The principal strategic objectives for this character area are to conserve and enhance estate landscape features such as the Decoy pond and associated wetland setting and areas of structural vegetation/woodland habitat associated with the former estate landscape, although opportunities to open views and restore areas of lowland riverside**

**common and pasture should also be sought to enhance the sense of the lowland valley character. Conserve the wooded transition to the Broads.**

#### ***Landscape Management***

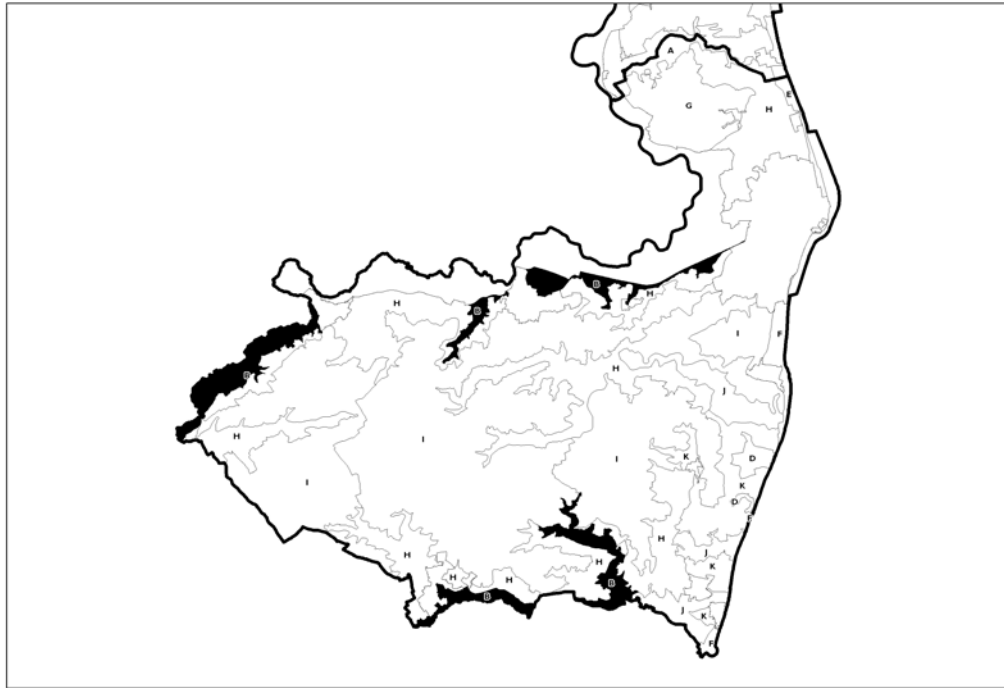
- A1.24 Key landscape management objectives encompass management regimes for areas of coppiced woodland within the southern or principal valley, to ensure a variation in woodland structure and light levels to facilitate the development of groundflora, in addition to the management of invasive or non characteristic species within the valley floor (such as *Rhododendron ponticum*), in addition to conserving the wooded character of the landscape at the transition with the Broads. Consideration should also be given to management of vegetation within the valley floor, in order to open up further views to the Decoy pond and to facilitate any opportunities for the re creation of historic landscape features such as lowland common and heathland.
- A1.25 The marshland and wetland within the small northern valley should be conserved and enhanced.

#### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- A1.26 Conserve the sparsely settled estate character. Development considerations relate primarily to recreational provision and use within the valley floor, which should respect the low key rural wooded valley character and existing vegetation. Opportunities for further low key access to the valley floor and to the water at Fritton Decoy should also be facilitated.

## B: RURAL RIVER VALLEYS

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- B. This landscape type constitutes two distinct, broad and well defined lowland river valleys, with boundaries defined by topography, extent of drift deposits, pastoral land cover and areas of later mineral extraction. The valley landform and the woodland to the valley sides often provide containment and limit the extent of available views.

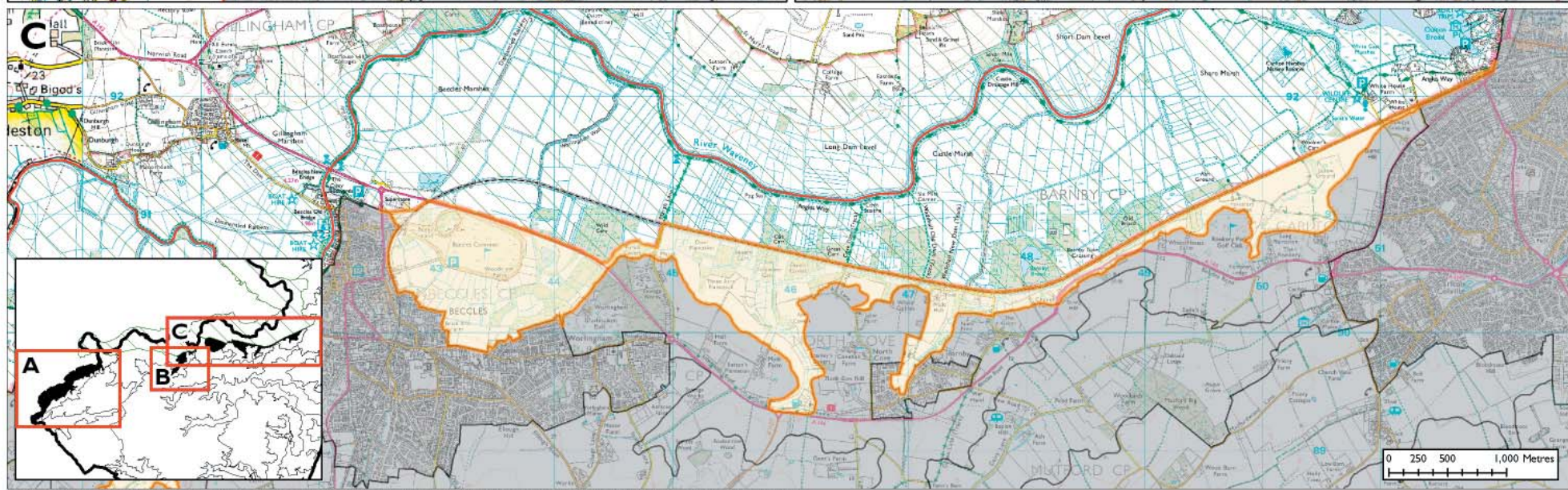
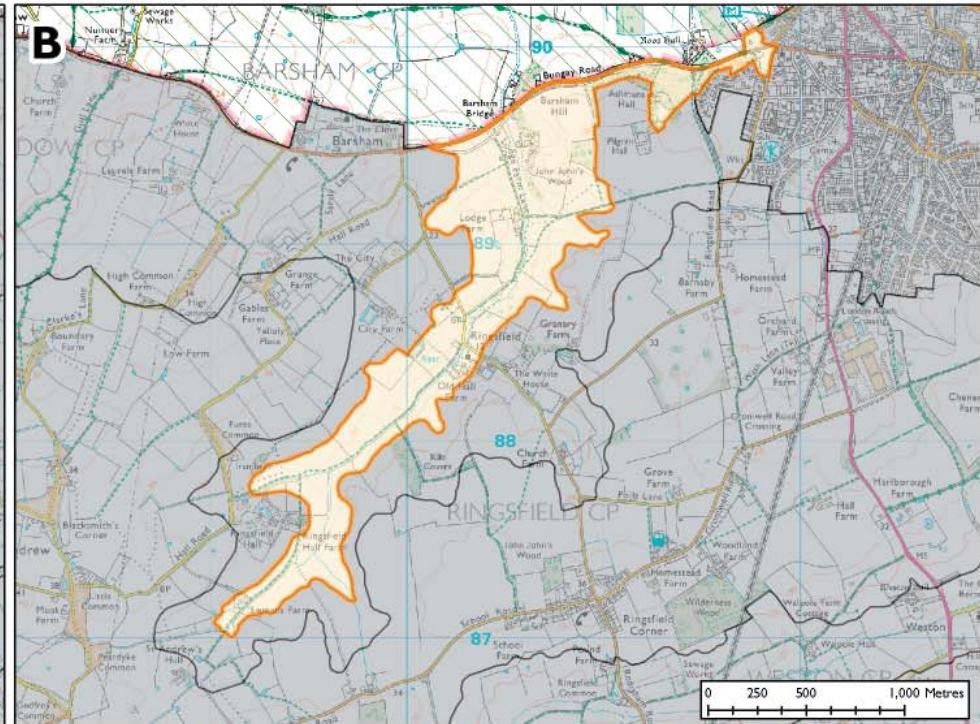
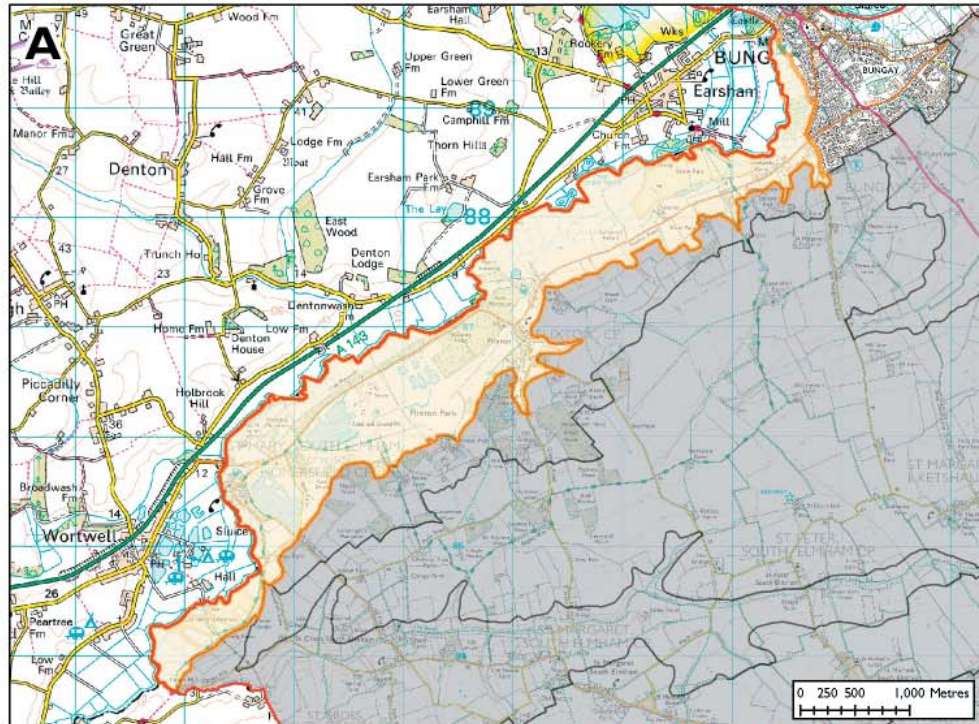
### Key Characteristics

- A Crag – Sand bedrock geology is overlain with drift deposits of fen peats, Lowestoft Tills, sand and gravels and alluvium, in addition to river terrace gravels which form low terraces adjacent to rivers at points;
- Elevation ranges from 0m AOD (valley floor) to 10-20m AOD (valley crests);
- Flood prone peat soils create wetland landscapes defined by wetland meadow, rush pasture and reedbed, in addition to carr woodlands to valley edges and areas of mixed/plantation woodland at the transition with the *Sandlings* landscape type;
- The juxtaposition of this range of wetland landscape elements often creates a complex and diverse landscape mosaic to the valley floors. Further variety and texture is created by lines of alder and by blocks of wet woodland;
- Field ditches and tributaries form field boundaries as do lines of alder;
- A contained, intimate spatial scale is created by valley landform and by woodlands fringing the valley sides;

- Tranquil, sparsely settled character, with settlement often confined to compact hamlets associated with narrow rural lanes along the valley crests, in addition to isolated farmsteads.

<b>Landscape Type B: Rural River Valleys</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>B1</b>	<b>Waveney Valley</b>
<b>B2</b>	<b>Blyth and Wang Valley</b>





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## **BI: WAVENEY VALLEY**

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### **Location and Boundaries**

- BI.1 *Waveney Valley* is located along the northern edge of Waveney District and borders the Broads Authority boundary (with much of the valley falling within the Broads Authority between Beccles and Bungay). This area therefore comprises a relatively small part of the valley on the southern side of the river. As a result of the administrative boundary (Norfolk/Suffolk and Waveney District/Broads Authority) the character forms a series of separate sections within Waveney District– although clearly the valley is perceived as a single landscape on the ground. It includes the compact valley settlements of Beccles and Bungay and runs east to the coast at Lowestoft. Tributaries drain northwards into the valley from more elevated land at North Cove and Ringsfield. The area is defined by the extent of drift deposits, the valley form and distinctive lowland pastoral vegetation.

### ***Relationship with the Broads Authority Executive Area***

- BI.2 A swathe of pastoral farmland between Mettingham, Shipmeadow and Barsham has similar characteristics to the area and has been excluded from the Broads LCA.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Dominated by peat deposits on the valley floor and sands and gravels including river terrace deposits to the west forming low terraces on the valley sides;
- A broad, flat valley, with landform ranging from 0-5m AOD on the valley floor to 15-20m AOD to the valley crests;
- Land cover is characterised by wet meadow and rough grazing, with small broadleaved coverts and carrs. The marshlands of the Broads to the north form a transitional edge;
- Carr woodland is a distinctive feature to much of the valley edge resulting in a well wooded landscape with significant visual containment, particularly to the east;
- A large common at Beccles (now a golf course), is a remnant of the formerly more extensive commons of the valley;
- Views are often framed by dense woodland and contained by rising topography although there are occasional glimpses across the expansive wetland landscape of the Broads landscape to the north with drainage mills/pumps a prominent element of views;
- County Wildlife Sites at Beccles Common, North Cove Alder Carrs and Flixton Pits recognise the ecological value of the wet woodland and the valley floor with carr woodland providing valuable habitats;

- Flixton Pits is an operational sand and gravel quarry. Its ecological value for invertebrates is recognised through a portion of the site designated as a County Wildlife Site;
- Reed beds coupled with intricate ditches and tributaries forms a small to medium landscape structure adding texture and variety, and creating an interesting landscape mosaic with significant seasonal variation;
- A simple rural road network results in a largely peaceful and tranquil landscape, although in parts this is interrupted by main roads, notably the A146 and rail line;
- Compact market towns of Bungay and Beccles have extended onto the valley sides. Outside these small towns settlement is confined to isolated halls and farms;
- Elements of the cultural landscape include commons at Beccles, a moated site at Wade Hall and Flixton Hall and small areas of remnant parkland;
- Forming the setting for the Broads this character area acts as a transitional buffer zone with the landscape sharing characteristics of the wetland character of the Broads.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- BI.3 The valley floor is dominated by peat deposits, with some sands and gravels on the valley sides. Tributary watercourses at North Cove and Ringsfield drain through the area continuing towards the River Waveney and the wider Broadland landscape. It is a broad, shallow valley with topography ranging from 0-5m AOD on the valley floor to 15-20 AOD on the valley crests at the transition with the *Tributary Farmland* landscape.
- BI.4 Land cover is characterised by fields of rough grazing and wet meadow, interspersed with numerous small blocks of carr woodland and plantation. Parts of the valley floor include remnant sandy heaths and commons, as at Beccles Common.
- BI.5 Designations in the adjoining Broads Authority at Barnby Broads and Marshes and Sprats Water and Marshes (SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar) provide valued habitats for birds and wildfowl as well as carr woodland and fen. This area of the Waveney valley forms the setting and buffer to these wetland landscapes. Ecological value is also recognised through County Wildlife Sites at Beccles Common, North Cove Alder Carrs and Timber Shrubs.
- BI.6 The Ecological Network Mapping Project highlights the river valley as a Strategic River Corridor and Wetland Habitat Zone. The character area acts as a key backdrop to the internationally designated landscape of the Broads, with much of the area falling within the Broads 1km buffer zone. The valley sides and crest are identified as Grassland Core areas with the western end of the character area falling within a General Enhancement Region.

## Historic Character

- BI.7 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have influenced the character of the landscape. These include 18<sup>th</sup> century and later enclosure of former marsh and fenland on the valley floor. On the upper valley sides there is some pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure resulting in a pattern of random fields. East of Beccles, Worlingham Hall and associated post medieval parkland in the adjacent *Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland* joins with the wet woodland and alder carr fringing the River Waveney along the valley floor and results in a strong historic character in this part of the area. The presence of large scale areas of commonland is a further reference to historic landscape character.
- BI.8 Other principal historic elements of the character area include Ashman's Hall and the remains of Barsham Hall, in addition to the outer extents of the parkland associated with Flixton Hall.

## Settlement and Built Character

- BI.9 Two market towns which developed as bridging points on the river occupy the valley, Bungay and Beccles. Bungay is a compact town of nucleated formation centred on the historic Market Place, the Perpendicular Church of Holy Trinity and the ruined castle. Red brick is distinctive. Beccles dates predominantly from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and later following a series of fires which destroyed much of the earlier fabric, although the earlier medieval street plan persists.
- BI.10 To the east the valley landscape terminates at Lowestoft where the river joins Oulton Broad.
- BI.11 The edges of the towns of Lowestoft, Beccles and Bungay, which have grown beyond the confined valley landform can be viewed from long distances across the more open plateau areas and on the approach to the Waveney Valley.
- BI.12 Outside the main towns, this is a sparsely settled landscape with occasional small villages and hamlets such as Barnby, Ringsfield and Barsham on the slopes above the valley floor. Isolated and prominent or large churches indicate historic settlement shrinkage. Traditional red brick barns and small farmsteads occur across the valley sides demonstrating local vernacular and contrasting with modern farm buildings which often form a dominant element of views into the adjoining tributary farmlands and plateau claylands.
- BI.13 References to Halls and estates occur frequently throughout the character area with remains of an isolated Hall existing at Barsham. Estates at Worlingham and Flixton in the neighbouring *Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland* character area and are a notable historic influence on the landscape character.

## Perceptual/Visual

- BI.14 The character area forms an important backdrop to The Broads with strong intervisibility with, and panoramic views across the Broadland landscape occurring intermittently along the valley bottom and in elevated areas. Prominent elements of Broadland views include drainage mills and pumps which punctuate the skyline.

Varied topography and landcover results in an intimate landscape scale, notably along the valley bottom where views are contained. Areas of dense carr woodland coupled with wetland reed and grazing pasture results in a textured landscape varying considerably throughout the seasons. Emergent spring groundcover (such as snowdrops) carpet woodland floors provide micro landscape interest and also create seasonal variation.

- BI.15 This is a peaceful landscape with few urbanising influences away from major settlements. Dispersed villages and farmsteads inhabit the landscape and are served by a simple rural road network. This is a relatively tranquil landscape in spite of the rural roads, and the railway running along the northern boundary.

## **EVALUATION**

- BI.16 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Carr woodlands which indicate historic land management practices and have ecological value;
- The function of character area as a setting to The Broads and forming a valuable buffer to the National Park and many nationally designated nature conservation sites, notably Barnby Broads and Marshes;
- An intricate mosaic of varied landscapes including carr woodland and wetland and grazing marsh alongside arable fields and mixed woodland creates a strong sense of place within the valley landscape, and which are vulnerable to changes in management;
- Tributaries and drainage ditches form ‘wetland fingers’ that cut the arable landscape creeping towards the valley bottom adding to the varied vegetation cover and habitat types;
- Compact market towns of Bungay and Beccles, which are currently relatively contained – this character could be eroded by residential extensions and linear development along roads;
- Large areas of lowland commons such as at Beccles and Homersfield which indicate historical land ownership and management processes that have shaped the landscape. Beccles Common is an important open space in proximity to the town

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- BI.17 Key visual sensitivities include considerable intervisibility with the open Broadland landscape to the north where panoramic views are coupled with ‘big skies’ and skylines punctuated by drainage mills and pumps. Views south towards the tributary valley farmland and expansive arable plateaux are more intimate, framed by wooded valley crests and undulating landform. Within these views large scale features, such

as farm buildings can potentially be very visually prominent, as could any development or further tall structures to the edge of the valley.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- BI.18 This is a varied wetland landscape with a clear sense of riparian character and definition created by areas of carr woodland. It is contained by mature woodlands within the adjacent *Mid Waveney Tributary Farmland* character area which marks the transition with the adjacent plateau. The area is defined by well managed wetland elements such as marsh/bog, carr woodland and grazing marsh. It is fringed by woodland and agricultural land.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Land reclamation for agriculture through drainage practices and construction of ditches, dykes and diversion of the River Waveney;
- The parkland influence of Flixton Hall estate and associated remnant designed landscape of wooded coverts and belts (to the edge of the area and partly within the adjacent Tributary Valley Farmland area);
- Gravel workings at Flixton Pits;
- Recreational pressures associated with the adjacent Broadland landscape;
- Settlement expansion of Beccles and Bungay extending beyond the valley floor;
- Decline in management where carr woodland and scrub has taken over, colonising wetland areas.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

- BI.19 Potential future change may arise through continued recreational pressures and associated infrastructure related to The Broads. Agricultural developments and crop diversification pose future challenges, as do climate change and rising water levels/flooding, causing a potential change in the character of the wetland landscape along the valley floor. Development pressures associated with the valley settlements, may result in further expansion, although this will be on higher areas, due to flood risk associated with the valley floor.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- BI.20 **The primary strategic objectives for the character area are to protect views of the wider Broadland landscape to the north of which the character area forms the setting. The river valley floodplains should be conserved and enhanced as a valued wetland habitat, complementing the internationally designated Broadland Landscape.**

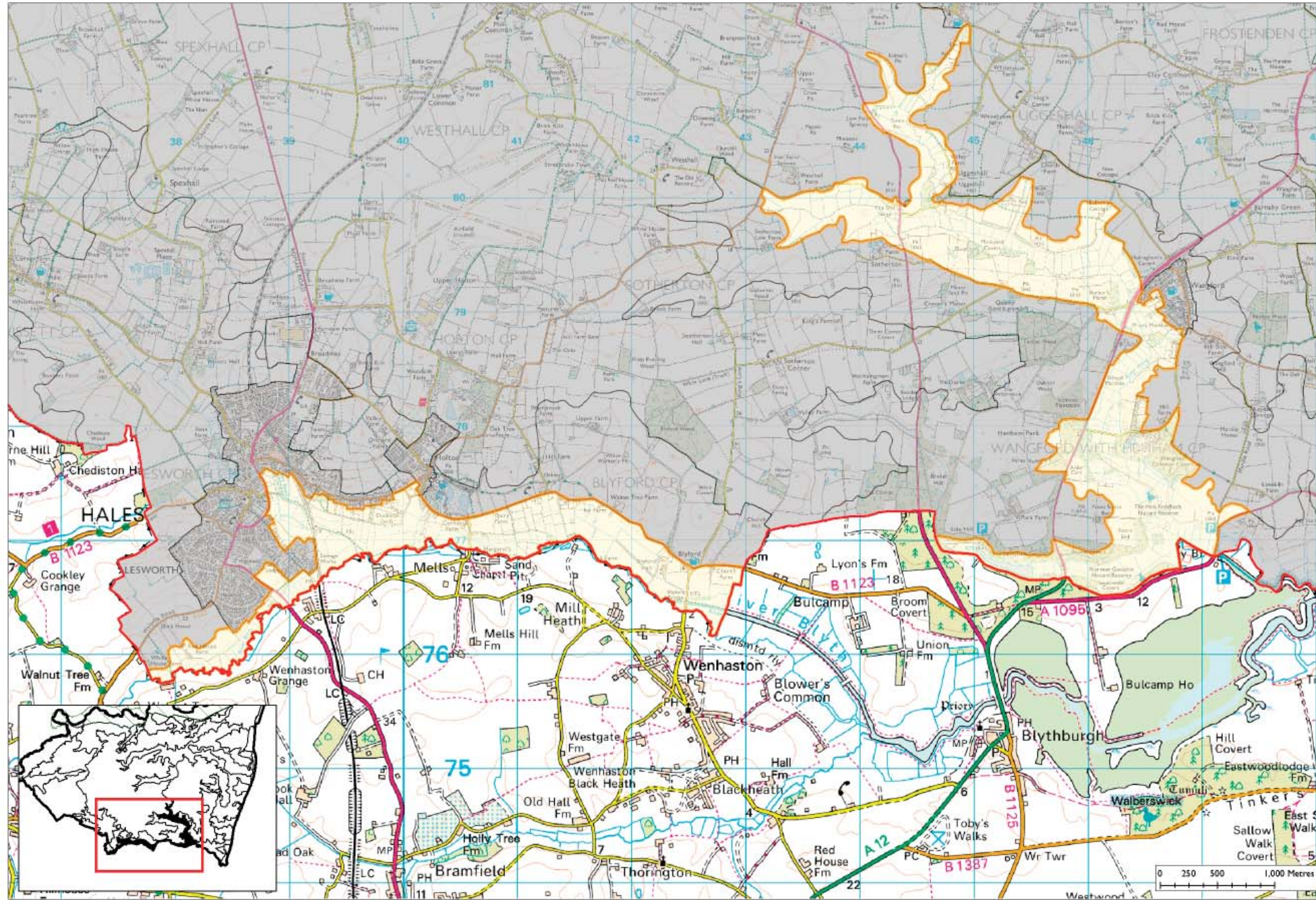
### ***Landscape Management***

- BI.21 Key landscape management objectives are to manage, conserve and enhance the varied mosaic of landcover types including wetland grazing marsh, which relate the landscape to that of the Broads. Management of carr woodland should aim to maintain the characteristic structure and composition and colonising scrub and carr woodland should be actively managed to avoid loss of wetland habitats. Opportunities for enhancing connectivity along field boundary lines should also be explored. Support/maintain grazing as landscape character is dependant on livestock farming, which may be of concern in the longer term.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- BI.22 Development considerations relate to the increased provision of recreational access and sensitive provision of river access (footpaths/towpaths etc) along the valley floor. Development considerations in relation to settlements along the valley should respond to the area as a backdrop to the Broads as well as the rural character of the wider landscape. The overall aim should be to retain the compact and contained markets towns and respect the sparsely settled character of the river valley between the larger settlements. The rural character of the roads along the valley should be conserved and they should not provide a catalyst for development.





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## B2: BLYTH AND WANG VALLEY

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### Location and Boundaries

- B2.1 The character area is located to the southern edge of Waveney District, with the River Blyth forming much of the southern District boundary. The area comprises of the floodplain and sides of the easterly draining Blyth Valley and a minor southerly draining river, the Wang, which feeds into the Blyth to the east of Henham Park. The character area is defined by the valley topography and the extent of the drift geology deposits and associated valley floodplain and meadows. The part of the character area to the east of the A12 falls within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, with the river valley rapidly giving way to the coastal estuary and marshland of area J3: *Blyth Estuary* beyond this point. The area is identified as falling within the *River Valley and Estuary with drained marsh landscape* types within the AONB Assessment.

### Key Characteristics

- A bedrock geology of Crag – Sand, with isolated areas of Crag – Gravels to the upper valley reaches is overlain by fen valley peats in the valley floor and deposits of river alluvium (clays/silts/sands/gravels), and sands and gravels of Lowestoft Formation to the valley sides;
- Vast tidal flat deposits are evident to the east, creating a marshland landscape as the valley opens into the estuary, marking the eastern extent of the character area;
- A broad, shallow valley with subtle landform variation and definition. The valley floor lies at 0m AOD, with the valley crests found at between 10-15m AOD;
- Flood prone peat soils are associated with drift deposits of peat and river alluvium in the valley floor. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils are evident elsewhere;
- A landscape of wetland meadow, reed and grazed/rush pasture, with the framework defined by the network of tributaries and field boundary ditches which drain into the two principal rivers;
- Landscape structure is provided by mixed native hedgerows and hedgerow trees including oaks which, in addition to the ditches create a rectilinear field boundary network of often intimate scale;
- Blocks of coppiced willow and alder carr woodland are distinctive. In addition to lines of alders along ditched boundaries, these create further variety and texture in a predominantly pastoral landscape;
- Acid soils on the sands and gravels create further variation within the landscape, including areas of remnant acid heath and grassland, and plantations, which are often associated with the adjacent *North Suffolk Sandlings* character area;

- Visual containment is provided by the valley landform and by the plantation woodlands fringing the character area, although views east towards Southwold and the marshes are more open;
- A mosaic landscape of considerable habitat interest, which is recognised in the SSSI designation of parts of the valley floor (also a RAMSAR site and SPA). Much of the rush pasture at the Wang Valley forms part of a County Wildlife Site;
- Historic landscape character is represented by the remains of the designed landscape of the now destroyed Henham Hall, part of which is within the area, including a lake in the valley floor;
- Evidence of recreational use is provided by the Norman Gwatkins Nature Reserve and by a network of rights of way.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- B2.2 Landform is that of a broad, shallow valley, based on a bedrock geology of Crag – Sand, overlain with fen valley peats within the valley floor and deposits of river alluvium, in addition to sands and gravels of Lowestoft formation to the valley sides, which have been exploited for mineral extraction in places. Topography ranges from 0m AOD within the valley floor to 10-15m AOD to the valley crests.
- B2.3 Soils within the valley floor are associated with the river alluvium and peat drift deposits, comprising of flood prone peat soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clay soils are evident elsewhere within the area. The soils create a landscape defined by wetland meadow, reedbed and grazed/rush pasture. The landscape framework is provided by a network of field boundary ditches and tributary watercourses which drain the two principal rivers, the Blyth and the Wang. The minor river of the Wang follows a meandering course along the valley floor, whilst that of the larger River Blyth has been shaped by marshland management and drainage in places with the course defined by engineered, sinuous curves at points.
- B2.4 Landscape structure is created by mixed native hedgerows and hedgerow trees including oak and alder, in addition to blocks of willow and alder carr woodland following the course of the Wang. Elm suckers are also evident within hedgerows, remnants of the formerly extensive distribution of Wych Elm in the area until the outbreak of Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s. Mixed woodland including small scale blocks of plantation on the footprints of former ‘coverts’ within the valley floor are also distinctive.
- B2.5 The range of wetland landscape elements in the valley floor results in a landscape mosaic of significant habitat interest and ecological diversity, with the reedbeds east of Henham Park forming part of the Norman Gwatkins Nature Reserve and providing significant breeding and overwintering bird habitat, recognised in its designation as part of the Minsmere-Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SSSI and also in its status as a Special Protection Area and as a wetland of international importance through the RAMSAR site designation. The SSSI is designated for the reedbeds which have

established on former grazing marsh, and which support a varied range of bird species, including marsh harrier, bittern and water rail. The rush pasture within the floor of the Wang valley is additionally identified as a County Wildlife Site (CWS).

### **Historic Character**

- B2.6 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have had expression upon the present day character of the landscape. These include meadow and wetland management to much of the valley floor, in addition to areas of 18<sup>th</sup> Century and later Enclosure to parts of the valley sides, notably at the Wang Valley to the north, in addition to areas of pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure to the head of the valley and isolated areas of field boundary loss arising from 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification.
- B2.7 Hodskinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk identifies the principal river crossing at Woolsey Bridge (a number of additional crossings are evident today), in addition to areas of marsh and meadow within the valley floor. The map shows a very sparsely settled valley landscape which largely remains today.
- B2.8 Principal extant elements of the cultural landscape include the parkland and remains of the designed landscape at Henham (a registered historic park), notably the lake in the valley floor. The park was formerly the setting for the Tudor Henham Hall, which was significantly remodelled in Italianate style in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and demolished in 1953. Parts of the gardens, notably the kitchen gardens, were destroyed at the same time. The designed landscape was by Repton (c.1790) and incorporated many other, earlier historic features (now undergoing restoration), notably the lime avenue and Tuttle's Wood, in addition to a distinctive 'crinkle-crinkle' Ha Ha wall. Mixed and coniferous plantation is also a feature of the estate and which extends into the valley floor.
- B2.9 Other elements of the cultural landscape include a moated site (SMR) within the mixed and plantation woodland at Moatyard Covert.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- B2.10 This is an extremely sparsely settled landscape, with settlement confined to occasional isolated dwellings and compact hamlets associated with the narrow rural road network. The few buildings are traditional in character and architectural style, with 18<sup>th</sup> Century and earlier fabric, and traditional red brick evident.
- B2.11 At the head of the valley (but not included as part of the character area) is the small town of Halesworth, which has expanded from the bridging point over the 'New Reach' and now extends up the valley sides.
- B2.12 The A12 corridor is the principal built influence within the character area, bisecting part of the valley north-south. Mineral extraction is also evident at Wangford Common.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- B2.13 A small scale, intimate and riparian landscape with views contained by the valley landform and by field boundary vegetation in addition to carr woodlands. The presence of wetland elements such as meadow, rush pasture, reedbed and osier/alder carr, in addition to coppiced willow, creates a richly textured, intricate and varied landscape mosaic of colourful appearance.
- B2.14 This is a tranquil, pastoral landscape, which is often remote in character due to the relatively sparse influence of settlement. Reedbeds create localised movement and variety, whilst the grazing of livestock on the grazing marshes and pastoral fields creates an additional element of visual interest intrinsically related to this wetland/valley landscape. The A12 corridor is a notable and divisive feature in this otherwise peaceful landscape. With the exception of the A12 corridor, the roads are unlit and this is a landscape of dark night skies.

## **EVALUATION**

- B2.15 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Area of carr woodland, which are important for historic landscape character and also as a BAP priority habitat;
- The mosaic of wetland habitats created by rush pasture, meadow, grazing marsh and reedbed, which strengthens the ecological diversity of the area;
- The sparsely settled, tranquil rural valley character which is evident in large parts of the area;
- The remains of the designed landscape and historic parklands at Henham.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- B2.16 Key visual sensitivities are judged to be the containment created by landform and by field boundary vegetation/carr woodland, in addition to the wooded backdrops created to views by the plantations at Henham. The open views towards Southwold across the valley and estuary to the east are sensitive.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- B2.17 This is a varied valley/floodplain landscape which is actively managed by traditional methods (e.g. grazing). It has a strong lowland wetland character. The mosaic of habitats and riparian features creates a landscape of not only coherent character but also considerable ecological diversity and importance, reflected in the nature conservation designations.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Emparking of land at Henham, construction of the hall and later laying out of the designed landscape;
- Enclosure of parts of the free draining valley sides for agriculture;
- Arable cultivation and attendant field boundary loss to some parts of the upper valley sides in the mid – late 20<sup>th</sup> Century;
- Demolition of Henham Hall and destruction of parts of the designed landscape;
- Widespread loss of elm trees within the landscape to Dutch Elm Disease;
- Mineral extraction on areas of sand and gravel in parts of the valley floor (ongoing/active);
- Restoration of parts of the designed landscape at Henham (ongoing).

### ***Potential Future Change***

B2.18 Potential future change may arise through the implementation of agri environment schemes and management of the wetland landscape. The valley floor is vulnerable to rising water levels and flooding in light of climate change, and the ‘inlanding’ of saltwater habitats. The restoration and reinstatement of the designed landscape at Henham Park is ongoing.

### **Strategic Objectives**

**B2.19 This is a key area for creation and enhancement of freshwater habitats as they move ‘inland’ in response to coastal flooding. Key strategic objectives are to conserve the lowland valley floodplain character and the intricate mosaic of habitats (which have significant biodiversity interest), notably reed beds, rush pasture, carr woodland. Aspects of the historic landscape such as the remains of Henham Park, should be conserved and enhanced.**

### ***Landscape Management***

B2.20 Principal considerations in relation to landscape management relate to conserving and enhancing areas of carr woodland and willow coppice as landscape features through appropriate management. Conserve and enhance the intricate network of small scale wetland mosaic landscape features such as rush pasture and reedbed, seeking opportunities to extend linkages between these features. Opportunities to reinstate historic landscape features such as elm trees with modern disease resistant clones/cultivars should be explored for hedgerow/field trees.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- B2.21 Development considerations relate primarily to conserving the existing small scale, sparse pattern of settlement, in addition to maintaining the low key, narrow rural road network and the tranquil rural landscape which is characterised by dark night skies. Open views to the east and views to the uninterrupted skylines should be conserved.
- B2.22 The relationship of the river to Halesworth, a town at the head of the river (New Reach) should be conserved. Any development within Halesworth or on the river edge should respect the rural river valley setting.



## D: COASTAL BROADS AND MARSHES

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- D. This landscape type forms a discrete area of coastal broads and wetlands and is represented by one character area within Waveney District. The boundaries are defined by the extents of peat drift and brackish waterbodies forming coastal broads and meres located inland of coastal shingle spits.

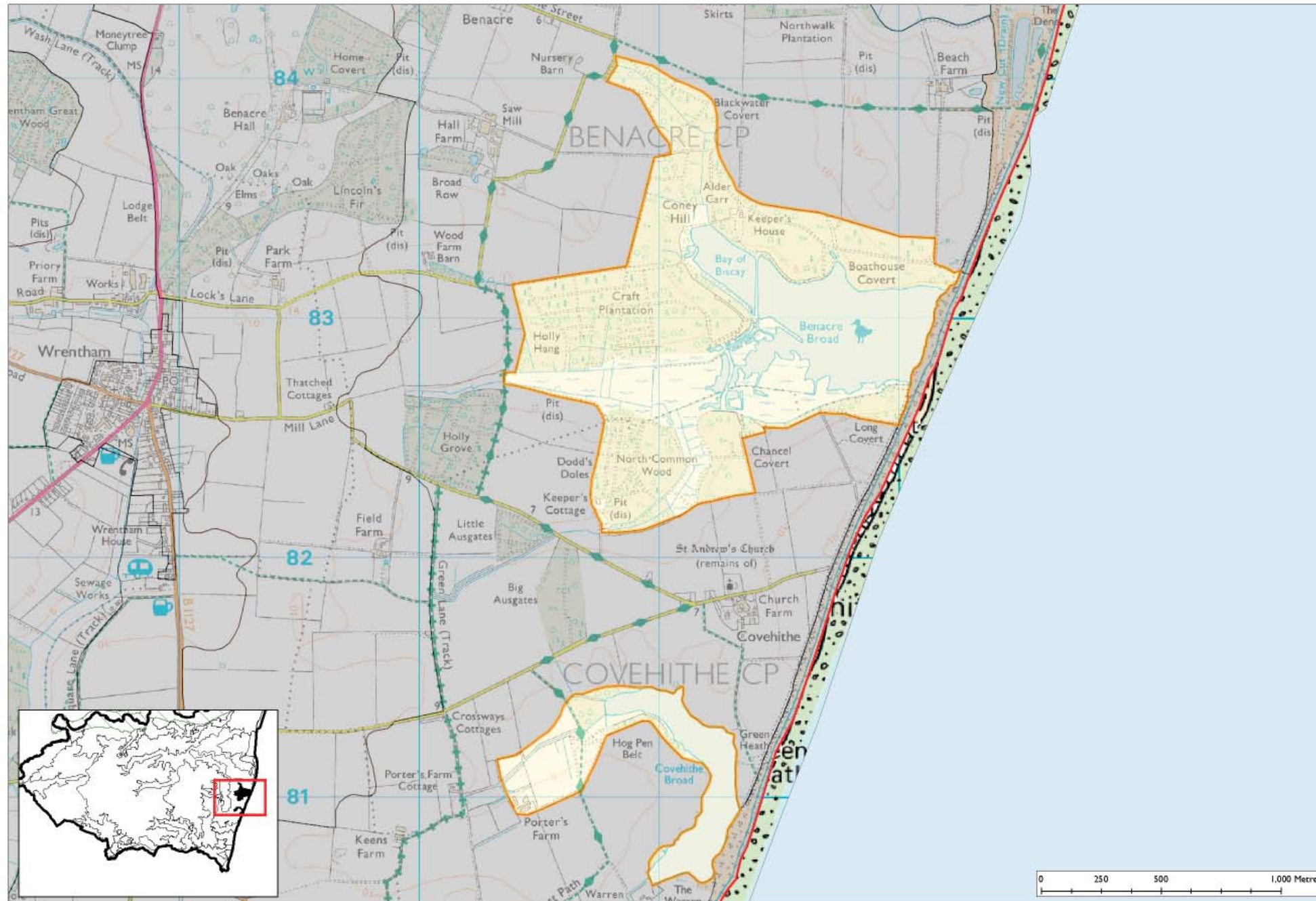
### Key Characteristics

- Peat drift deposits overlay a bedrock geology of Crag;
- Low lying topography at 0-4m AOD;
- Area of marshland and reedbed are juxtaposed with open water bodies;
- Remote, open and unsettled character and often windswept aspect;
- Pine lines of the Sandlings often form a backdrop, creating textural variation;
- Reflectivity and variation in light is created by the water bodies and proximity to the sea.

**Landscape Type D: Coastal Broads and Marshes**

**Character Area**

<b>DI</b>	<b>Covehithe and Benacre Coastal Broads</b>
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# DI: COVEHITHE AND BENACRE COASTAL BROADS

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## Location and Boundaries

D1.1 These are areas of coastal marsh and open water 'broads' distinct from the estuary and river marsh. The character area comprises two geographical areas at Covehithe Broad and Benacre Broad, in Waveney District to the south of Kessingland. Both areas are within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. These are former estuaries that have sealed by the accretion of shingle bars across the coastal edge. They form broad marshy bays separated from the sea by high shingle beaches.

## Key Characteristics

- Topographically contained, bounded by low ridges rising to the north and south forming broad low lying marshes separated from the sea by high shingle beaches;
- Clay, silts and peats have accumulated within the low lying valley system;
- Large pools of open water immediately behind the shingle bar. The Broad at Benacre has a complex outline of bays and peninsulas, while Covehithe by comparison is more elongated;
- At Benacre Broad plantation woodland surrounds and frames the Broad creating a very enclosed 'hidden' character;
- An absence of built development, with no roads or buildings apart from a small farm on the edge of Covehithe and the Keeper's House in the plantation at Benacre;
- The transition of open water, reedbeds, marsh to dry land is of high ecological interest, with the fluctuating salinity supporting a range of rare and unusual species, as well as wetland birds (recognised in NNR, SSSI and SAC designation);
- A simple landscape of open water pools, reedbed and plantation woodland;
- Subtly rising landform enclose the Broads – the pine lines of the Sandlings often form the backdrop,
- Contained, enclosed and 'remote' character, with very few restricted views to the open water;
- A dynamic landscape with shifting coastal edge and erosion resulting in saltwater ingress and fluctuating salinity.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- D1.2 On the low lying coastal edge, this landscape is a result of coastal processes which have resulted in the accumulation of sediment bars across the mouths of small rivers, effectively sealing the former estuaries. Overtopping or percolation of the bars by sea water has resulted in a series of saline lagoons of which Easton Broad (see character area J2) in the south is the least saline and Benacre Broad in the north the most saline. They consist of pools of open water surrounded by reedbeds and illustrate a progression from water through marsh to drier ground at the edges. The open water is contained by the subtly rising landform with wooded (Benacre) or open (Covehithe) skylines. The 20<sup>th</sup> century plantation woodland around the water at Benacre is a key land use.
- D1.3 The broads are of great biodiversity interest for the range of rare/unusual species including starlet sea anemone and lagoon sand shrimp and form part of Pakefield to Easton Bavents SSSI and the Benacre to Easton Bavents SAC. The vegetated shingle bars, as at Benacre Ness are also of interest comprising eroded, open, vegetated and disturbed shingle with areas of sandy grassland and open marram grass.

### **Historic Character**

- D1.4 The historic character is clearly closely tied to the natural processes that created the lagoon landscape. The wider landscape is part of the Benacre Estate. At Benacre Broad mixed plantation woodland now surrounds and conceals the open water creating a hidden landscape with few views to or from the open water.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- D1.5 The coastal broads are characterised by an absence of built development, with no roads or buildings apart from a small farm on the edge of Covehithe and the Keeper's House in the plantation at Benacre.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- D1.6 At the coastal edge this is a simple, landscape of big skies with panoramic views across sea and along the undeveloped coastline. In contrast behind the shingle bar is a quiet, still, reflective landscape of open water enclosed by plantation woodland or subtly rising land, with an undeveloped skyline including distinctive Sandling pine lines. The landscape has a secret 'hidden' quality and is largely, inaccessible except by foot and with few glimpsed views in or out. An exception is the view to open water from the ruins of St. Andrews Church at Covehithe.

## **EVALUATION**

- D1.7 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

## **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Delicate saline balance of the open water which is especially vulnerable to pollution;
- The transition of open water, reed bed and dry ground creating a landscape and habitat mosaic.
- The dynamic coastal processes which created the system of saline lagoons;
- The hidden 'inaccessible', remote, wild character of this part of the Suffolk coast.

## **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- D1.8 The key visual sensitivities are the occasional glimpsed views from surrounding land into the areas of open water. The views of the undeveloped coastal edge and the subtle skylines that enclose the Broads are also important.

## **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- D1.9 This is an unusual landscape, with a clear sense of place created by the open water pools and contained, still, remote character. It has a high biodiversity interest but represents a dynamic, ephemeral landscape created by coastal processes and will change as a result of vegetation succession and sea level rise.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Creation of the shingle bars across the mouths of the small rivers where they reach the coast, enclosing the water body now making up the 'broad'.
- Overtopping of the bars by saline water to create brackish lagoons.
- Forestry plantation enclosing the edge of the water body at Benacre Broad.

### ***Potential Future Change***

- D1.10 The main threat is associated with climate change and associated sea level rise. This process may over time obliterate the lagoons. Coastal defence works may also affect the lagoons, either directly or by interfering with the movement and deposition of sediment along the coast. They are also vulnerable to pollution, especially nutrient enrichment.
- D1.11 Sedimentary bars creating lagoons such as the one at Benacre and Covehithe naturally tend to move landward over time, eventually leading to the infilling of the broads.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- D1.12 **The primary strategic objective is to conserve and enhance the character and associated biodiversity interest of the saline lagoons that make up the**



**Coastal Broad.** Their importance should be recognised in the **Shoreline Management Plan**. The aim should be to retain the wild, remote character which is intrinsic to the **Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB**. In particular, any future coastal defence (elsewhere) should ensure that it does not have an adverse impact on the shingle spits and associated lagoons.

***Landscape Management***

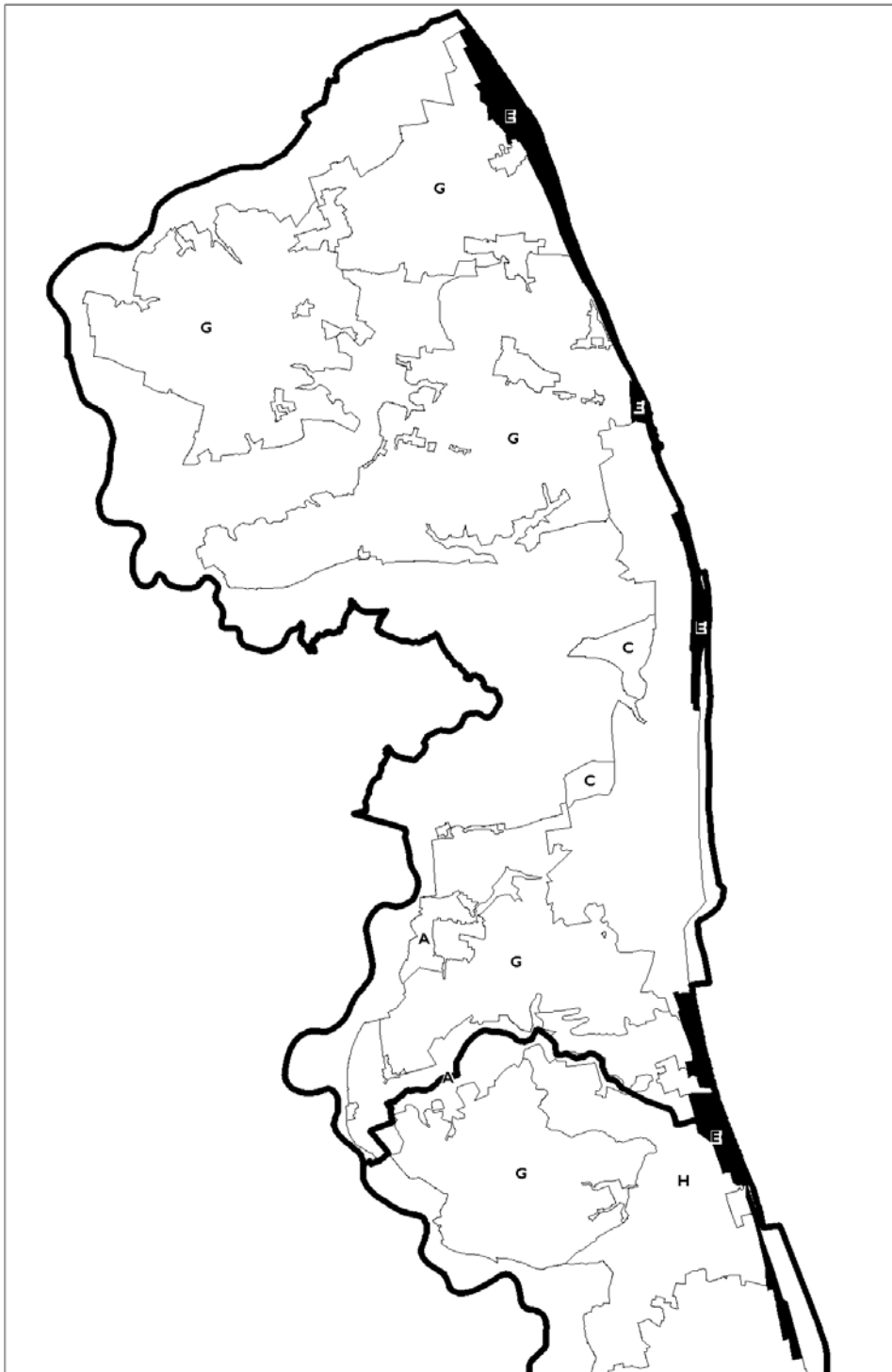
D1.13 The primary requirement is to monitor succession and salinity of the lagoons and conserve and enhance their biodiversity interest. Management of the surrounding land (for agriculture or forestry) should consider impacts on the lagoons and aim to minimise pollution and sediment run off.

***Considerations in relation to development***

D1.14 The aim should be to conserve the undeveloped, remote and wild character of this part of the coast. In particular, the undeveloped coastal edge and enclosing skylines of the Broad should be retained. Ensure any future coastal defence works does not impede the movement of sediments along the shore or result in loss of or damage to the lagoons.

## E: DUNES, COASTAL LEVELS AND RESORTS

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- E. This landscape type considers the principal coastal landscapes within Great Yarmouth Borough and is represented by two character areas. The type encompasses stable

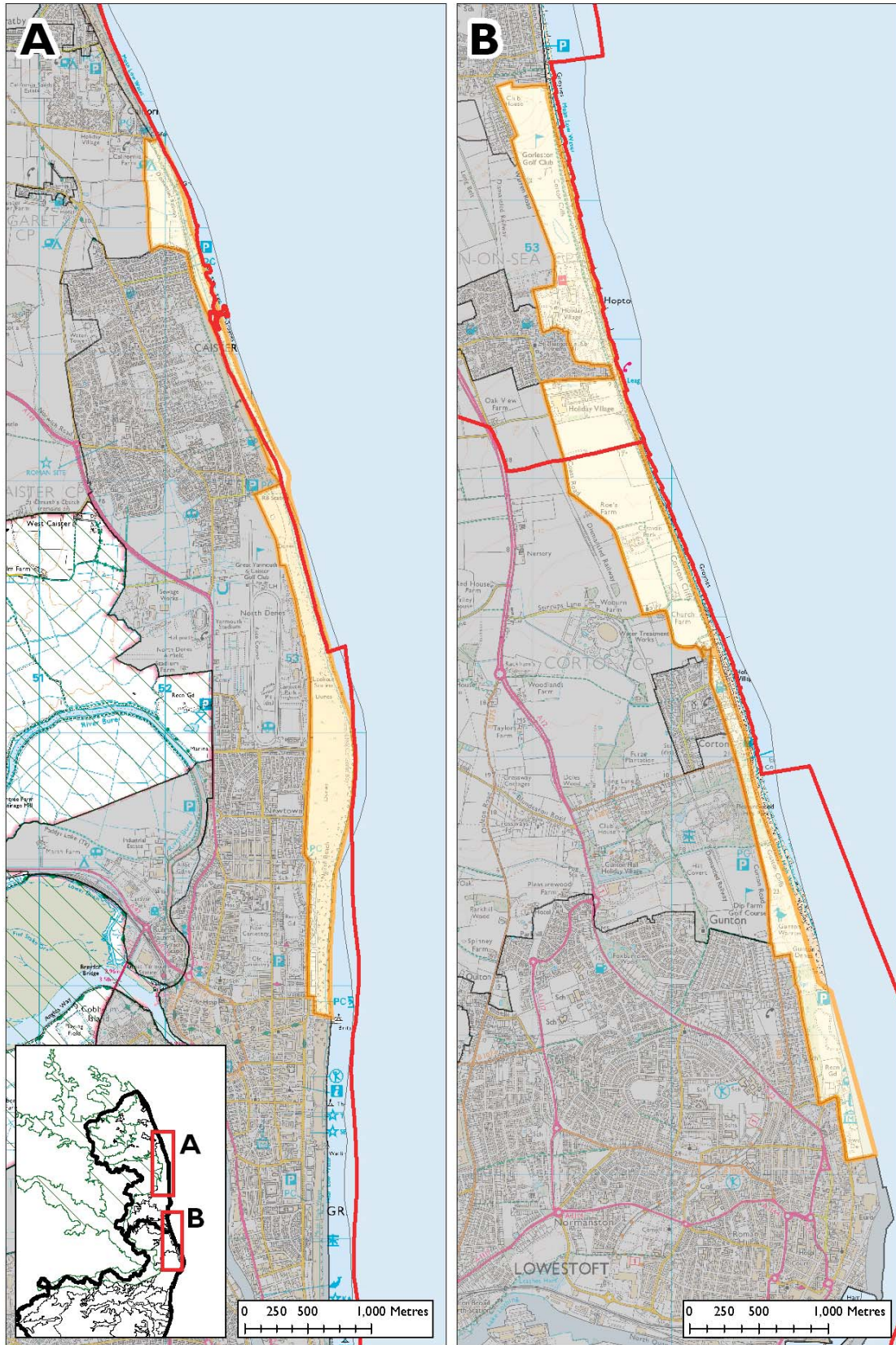
duneland coastal/beach landscapes in addition to resort development associated with settlements such as Great Yarmouth.

### Key Characteristics

- Defined by sand drift deposits and by areas of low Crag coastal cliffs which represent outcrops of the bedrock geology;
- Low topography, ranging from sea level to 10-15m AOD to coastal cliffs;
- Stable dune systems, dune heaths and grasses and grazing marshes are characteristic features of the landscape type;
- Artificial coastlines created by coastal defences and sea walls are a distinctive feature associated with settled parts of the coast;
- Extensive panoramic views along the coastlines often include views of offshore wind farms;
- Views inland are often of a more contained character due to the backdrop provided by coastal settlement and resort development;
- Ephemeral landscapes characterised by tidal movement and by weather processes/systems, with considerable transient variation in light and colour.

<b>Landscape Type E: Dunes, Coastal Levels and Resorts</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<i>E1</i>	<i>Winterton Dunes and Coastal Strip</i>
<b>E2</b>	<b>Great Yarmouth Coastal Strip</b>





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## **E2: GREAT YARMOUTH COASTAL STRIP**

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### **Location and Boundaries**

- E.2.1 The *Great Yarmouth Coastal Strip* character area extends from Caister-on-Sea to Great Yarmouth seafront towards the harbour entrance and also considers the strip of coast between Gorleston and Corton, straddling the District Boundary. This description relates to the whole area, which is defined by the extent of coastal dunes and beaches.

### **Key Characteristics**

- A Crag bedrock geology is overlain with swathes of sand and gravel drift deposits and fringed by beach sands and marine shingle along the seaward edge;
- Landform is flat and ranges from 0m AOD at along the coastline to 15m AOD inland, the manmade promenade creates an artificial level change;
- Views are panoramic, stretching far along the coastline with the Scroby Sands offshore wind farm dominating seaward views;
- Recreational resort and residential development forms the backdrop to views inland (including caravan parks at Caister-on-Sea and Hopton-on-Sea);
- Evidence of erosion and resultant methods of prevention demonstrate the ephemeral character, affected by weather processes and tides;
- Dune heath and grasslands merge into grazing marsh on settlement edges at North Denes, which are designated SSSI and SPA for their habitat value in relation to bird nesting and breeding as well as a diverse flora and distinctive dune system;
- A strong sense of place is created by the presence of terns, waders and sea gulls, and associated noise, along the shoreline, as is the presence of seals off the beach;
- A landscape of simple horizons and big skies. Continual change is provided by the effects of varying light and tidal movement, creating a dynamic landscape;
- A landscape of simple horizons and big skies.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- E2.2 A bedrock geology of Crag is overlain by acidic sandy soils forming rolling dunes, and exposed Crag cliffs at California and Hopton-on-Sea ranging from 0-15m AOD. Dune heath at Great Yarmouth supports a wide range of flora and habitats within the tussocky rough grass. Overwintering Birds are particularly common at North Denes SSSI.



- E2.3 Where the character area extends inland (often between settlements e.g. Great Yarmouth and Caister-on-Sea) beyond the beach, dunes and cliff areas are dominated by settlement edge development and are characterised by rough grassland and gorse regeneration on former dunes.
- E2.4 Within the Norfolk Ecological Network Mapping Project (Econet), Wetland habitat zones stretch along the entire length of the coast with a 1km Broads buffer region and Strategic River Corridor area extending to the mouth of the Yare at Great Yarmouth. Areas at North Denes are also identified for potential heathland creation.
- E2.5 Great Yarmouth North Denes is SSSI and SPA designated due to a diverse range of flora ranging from pioneer to mature vegetation. It also supports important bird habitats, notably the Little Tern and is recognised for its Dune system which unlike other sites in the region is actively accreting. California Coastal Strip also demonstrates a diverse range of duneland flora and is a designated County Wildlife Site.

### **Historic Character**

- E2.6 Of particular importance to the historical development of this stretch of coastline is the 'silting up' of the Great Estuary (now Breydon Water) at the mouth of the Yare. Over time a huge sandbank was formed through silt from deposition and gradually became settled to form the origins of Great Yarmouth.
- E2.7 Faden's 1797 Map identifies a number of landscape features that make reference to historical processes that have affected the evolution of the coast and seascape, notably batteries and forts (particularly at Great Yarmouth and Caister-on-sea), which once formed part of the coastal defence system but are no longer extant, as well as many lighthouses.
- E2.8 In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century settlements grew from small isolated fishing villages reliant on the herring industry to holiday resorts. Evidence of this is provided by the direct rail route that once ran from Great Yarmouth to Lowestoft and exists now through remnant bunds and earthworks along the coast through Hopton-on-Sea.
- E2.9 The popularity of the coast continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century through the expansion of holiday resorts, notably through large caravan sites often occurring between larger settlements e.g. at Caister-on-Sea.
- E2.10 Large areas of Common land once ran along parts of the coast at Hopton, however due to coastal erosion and development no traces remain.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- E2.11 Great Yarmouth promenade forms much of the backdrop to the character area with development associated with tourism and recreation. Victorian and Regency architecture remains a dominant style but has been greatly altered as a result of the tourism industry. Residential and resort development also extends along much of the length of the character area. The settlement of Caister-on-Sea (of Roman origin) lies north of Great Yarmouth and remains separate from the town.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- E2.12 As the cliff face becomes more pronounced towards Lowestoft views from inland areas at Hopton-on-Sea of coastal features such as beaches, walls and groynes becomes limited and intervisibility with inland areas is more restricted than in other coastal areas north of Great Yarmouth e.g. Winterton.
- E2.13 Sea walls associated with the coastal promenade built over many years create an engineered level change that demonstrates a long history of coastal erosion and defence. Such sea walls also result in restricted views of the sea and beaches, which often fall several metres below inland ground levels.
- E2.14 The Scroby Sands windfarm forms a prominent feature of panoramic seaward views and add to an ongoing sense of movement and activity.
- E2.15 A dynamic, ephemeral landscape where varying scale, tidal movements, light, and weather contribute to a varied palette of colours and textures, varying with the time of day and the seasons. A sense of containment provided by emerging cliffs and dunelands contrasts with the exposed and windswept beaches that evoke a strong sense of 'wildness'.
- E2.16 Skyline features resulting from resort development such as roller coasters and piers form a strong element of views inland at Great Yarmouth and along the coastline towards Lowestoft.
- E2.17 Open land between settlements (e.g. between Hopton-on-Sea and Gorleston-on-Sea) provide glimpses of the coast and seascape. However visibility is limited due to inland obstructions such as roadside hedgerows.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- E2.18 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.
- Dunes and beaches provide a valuable buffer between the sea and inland areas acting as a key flood defence as well as supporting a range of habitats;
  - Coastal walls and sea defences not only act as key functional structures but also give reference to important historical processes that highlight the ongoing pressures of coastal erosion;
  - Long and windswept sandy beaches are used at varying intensities depending on location and season but which always represent an ephemeral landscape of high habitat value and sense of 'wilderness';
  - The open rural gaps between settlements are important landscape features and help to retain the identity of individual settlements.

## **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- E2.19 Key visual sensitivities include the intervisibility between coastal and inland areas. Views to the seascape form valuable 'buffers' and help retain the individual character of settlements. Views of the wild seascape can be far reaching in places but also more intimate where roadside hedgerows, tree cover and gently undulating landform result in more intimate framed views.

## **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- E2.20 This is a diverse landscape influenced by settlement growth associated with recreational and residential pressures. Artificial coastal edges have been created at points due to the pressures placed on the landscape and settlements by coastal erosion and the construction of coastal defences.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- The 'silting up' of the mouth of the Great Estuary creating a sand bank or 'spit' that formed the origins of Great Yarmouth. Subsequent 'channelling' was needed many years later after the harbour continued to block with increase sediment build-up and the manmade channel that exists today was carved;
- Industrial development and growth of Great Yarmouth as a key port as well as neighbouring communities growing from a long history of fishing (particularly related to the herring industry);
- Artificial coastal defences;
- Settlement expansion as a response to growing tourist industry and popularity of 'bucket and spade' holidays starting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

### ***Potential Future Change***

- E2.21 The Kelling to Lowestoft Shoreline Management Plan recognises the importance of the management of the shoreline in relation to ongoing effects of climate change and associated pressures of sea level rise. Such changes will influence settlement development as well as existing habitats along the coast and inland. Strategies should consider accommodating evolving sediments systems and the impact of constructed defences.
- E2.22 There may be increased demand for renewable energy both onshore and offshore, in addition to potential development pressures to the edges of coastal settlements.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- E2.23 **The primary strategic objectives for the character area are to conserve and enhance existing habitats associated with remaining dunes, sands and the coastal character. Open areas and views of the seascape and shoreline should also be conserved.**

### ***Landscape Management***

- E2.24 The Shoreline Management Plan highlights the planned removal of flood defences as a preferred response to sea level rise and enhancing coastal character. Accommodating coastal erosion and long-shore drift will need to be monitored alongside water quality and leaching.
- E2.25 Continued maintenance and enhancement of duneland habitats should be promoted alongside the existing designated areas, although it is recognised that these habitats are vulnerable to coastal erosion and rising sea levels.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- E2.26 Conserve remaining open views towards the coast/seascape. The cohesive sculptural form of Scroby Sands wind farm should also be preserved, avoiding additional offshore windfarm development.
- E2.27 Coastal defences should respect local intrinsic coastal character and visual sensitivities whilst considering the coastal defence policy in order to accommodate future pressures.
- E2.28 Conserve remaining open views towards the coast and seascape, in particular open coastal areas between settlements e.g. at California Cliffs.



## F: COASTAL CLIFFS

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- F. This landscape type is defined by low Crag coastal cliffs broken by coastal estuaries and shingle spits and nesses. It contains two local character areas.

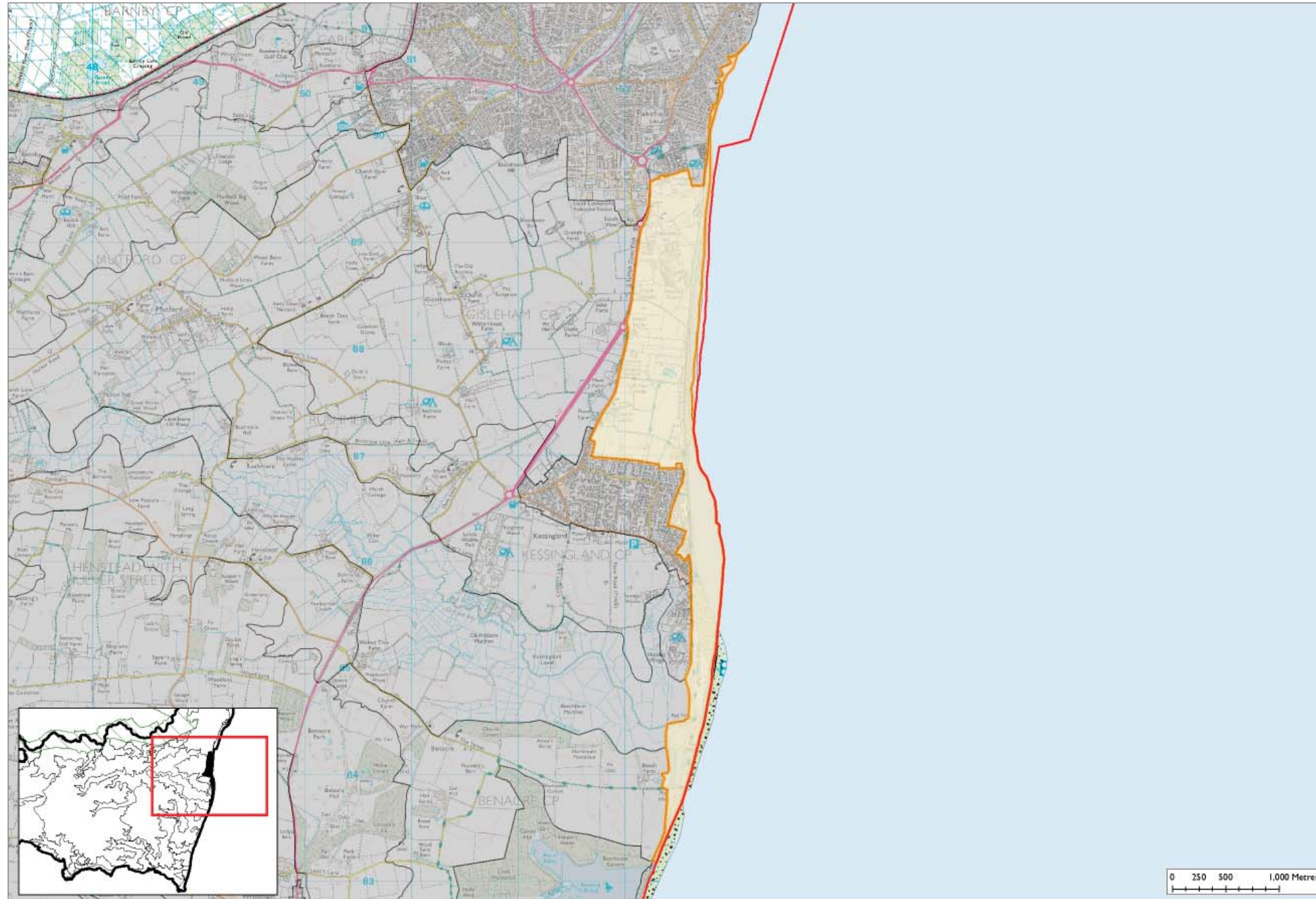
### Key Characteristics

- A Crag – sand bedrock geology is overlain with sand and gravel beach deposits, in addition to tidal flats and silt/clay deposits. The bedrock is apparent in low, erosion prone Crag coastal cliffs;
- A coastal landscape with little landform variation other than areas of duneland and Crag cliffs;
- Acid, sandy soils overlay glaciofluvial drift deposits, creating a landscape of grassy dunes. Shingle spits occur at the mouth of marshland estuaries which open on to the coast;
- Duneland and localised areas of scrubby woodland, in addition to areas of coastal marsh create diversity. Saline plant species such as tree lupins are apparent on the beaches;
- Panoramic views are available across the coastal marshes with infrastructure such as power stations forming a prominent, albeit distant horizon element;

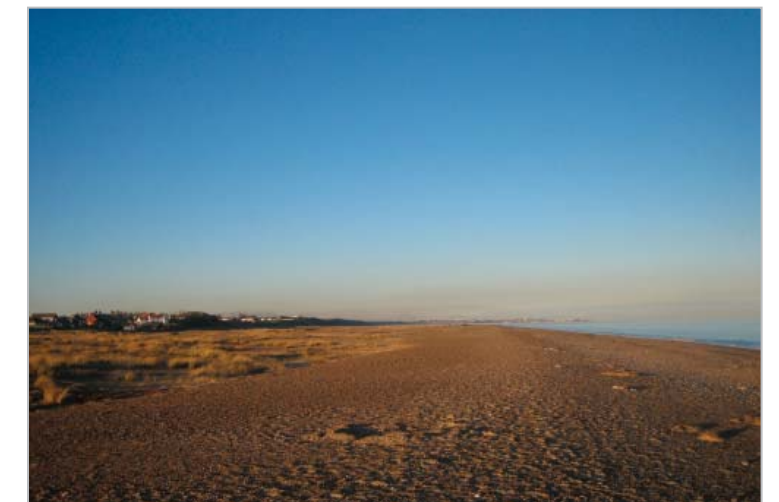


- Settlement within the landscape type is characterised by low key cliff top towns, often physically contained by the cliffs and estuaries, and the influence of coastal resort development is limited;
- The coast has a wild and windswept, exposed quality and a strongly ephemeral visual character due to tidal movement, reflected light and the influence of the weather.

<b>Landscape Type F: Coastal Cliffs</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>F1</b>	<b>Pakefield to Benacre Coastal Cliffs</b>
<b>F2</b>	<b>Southwold Coast</b>



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# FI: PAKEFIELD TO BENACRE COASTAL CLIFFS

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## Location and Boundaries

- FI.1 The character area forms a narrow band of low, soft coastal cliffs and associated shingle spit and beach above the low water mark to the south of Lowestoft, where it forms the visible Pakefield and Kessingland cliffs. It creates the coastal edge to Kessingland and extends south to Benacre Broad where it terminates as a shingle bar (DI).
- FI.2 The area is entirely within Waveney District. The northernmost part, where it forms a spit across the mouth of the Hundred River (JI) is within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

## Key Characteristics

- The cliff is formed of the exposed Crag Sand bedrock, plus associated sand and gravel beach deposits, with an exposed shingle bars;
- The bedrock is visible in the low Crag coastal cliffs at Pakefield and Kessingland with the exposed Crag sediments of great geological interest (SSSI);
- A low cliff and dune coastal landscape with local landform variation in the form of cliffs and the sculpted dune and beach deposits;
- Acid, sandy soils overlay glaciofluvial drift deposits, creating a landscape of grassy dunes, and acid grassland/heathland and exposed vegetated shingle;
- Panoramic views are available from the cliff edge across the North Sea and in the northern part to Lowestoft and its pier;
- The cliff and coastal edge is undeveloped, although the flatter cliff top area between Lowestoft and Kessingland and immediately south of Kessingland provides the location for holiday resort development with caravan, chalet parks and campsites;
- The Pakefield to Easton Bavenes SSSI recognises the high geodiversity interest of the coast including the soft sandy cliffs, vegetated shingle bars and saline lagoons (the Denes). The southernmost part of the area is included within a SPA;
- Principal historic feature of the character area is Pakefield Hall now subsumed within a holiday camp development;
- The coast has a wild and windswept, exposed quality and a strongly ephemeral visual character due to tidal movement, reflected light and the influence of the weather;
- A dynamic, shifting landscape changing with the tides and wind;
- Recreational use associated with the resort developments at Kessingland.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- FI.3 The low cliffs provide good exposures of the Crag formation and are rich in fossils forming a feature of great geological interest. The character area also includes vegetated shingle bars and features illustrating coastal processes involving the movement of sand and shingle. The naturally eroding cliffs constantly reveal new faces yielding fresh supplies of fossils.
- FI.4 The cliff top contains a sparse vegetation of grassland and gorse. North of Kessingland, the flatter cliff top contains areas of amenity grassland within the resort developments and areas in arable cultivation.
- FI.5 The area is in a dynamic state of constant change with the effect of wind and wave acting on the soft rocks. At Kessingland the shingle bar protects the cliffs from coastal erosion.

### **Historic Character**

- FI.6 In addition to natural processes, historical processes have also contributed to local character. Most notable is the rapid expansion of settlements and resort development between Lowestoft and Kessingland.
- FI.7 Hodkinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk shows a large area of heath extending to the cliffs between Kessingland and Lowestoft. This is now enclosed and in arable use or forms part of a camping/caravan site, although vestiges of the heathy vegetation remains with gorse and other acidic vegetation in hedgerow and verges. The HLC indicates that much of the cliff top area is 18<sup>th</sup> century and later enclosure, with the cliff itself classified as unimproved land. The former Pakefield Hall is now subsumed by modern holiday park development.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- FI.8 The cliff and coastal edge is undeveloped, although the flatter cliff top area between Lowestoft and Kessingland and immediately south of Kessingland provides the location for mid 20<sup>th</sup> century holiday resort development with caravan, chalet parks and campsites.

### **Perceptual/Visual Character**

- FI.9 From the low cliff top there are long distant views out to the North Sea and along the coast, taking in the lights and pier at Lowestoft and the undeveloped coastal edge south of Kessingland. This is an exposed large scale seascape where the wind and water are dominant elements. The coast south of Kessingland has a particularly isolated, even remote character due to the absence of development and limited access along footpaths and tracks.

## **EVALUATION**

FI.10 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- The geological interest of the low soft cliffs (fossils) and coastal geomorphological processes;
- Shingle spits and bars such as that which limit wave erosion of the cliffs at Kessingland;
- The transient, dynamic seascape;
- The remote, inaccessible character of the coast south of Kessingland.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

FI.11 Key visual sensitivities are the glimpses to the undeveloped coastline between Lowestoft and Kessingland and views to the remote, inaccessible coast south of Kessingland. The wide open skies are a key element of this part of the Suffolk coast.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

FI.12 This landscape is variable in terms of its condition and intactness. The holiday resort development creates a very typical seaside landscape of chalets and caravans around Kessingland. To the south of Kessingland the absence of settlement and coastal resort results in a considerable stretch of undeveloped, remote coastline, only accessible by foot. At Pakefield the crumbling soft cliffs are clear evidence of a coastal retreat.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

FI.13 This is a dynamic landscape which is constantly changing in response to the sea. Past changes include:

- Loss of heathland and enclosure for agriculture;
- Erosion of the soft coastal cliffs. In some cases this has resulted in a threatened and neglected landscape in the light of coastal retreat;
- Resort development around Kessingland.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

FI.14 Future change will arise through climate change and associated rise in sea levels. The future of this section of the coast will be dependent on decisions on future coastal



management. Managed retreat will mean that the cliff continues to erode and release sediment and expose fresh cliff faces, although over time they will ultimately be lost.

### **Strategic Objectives**

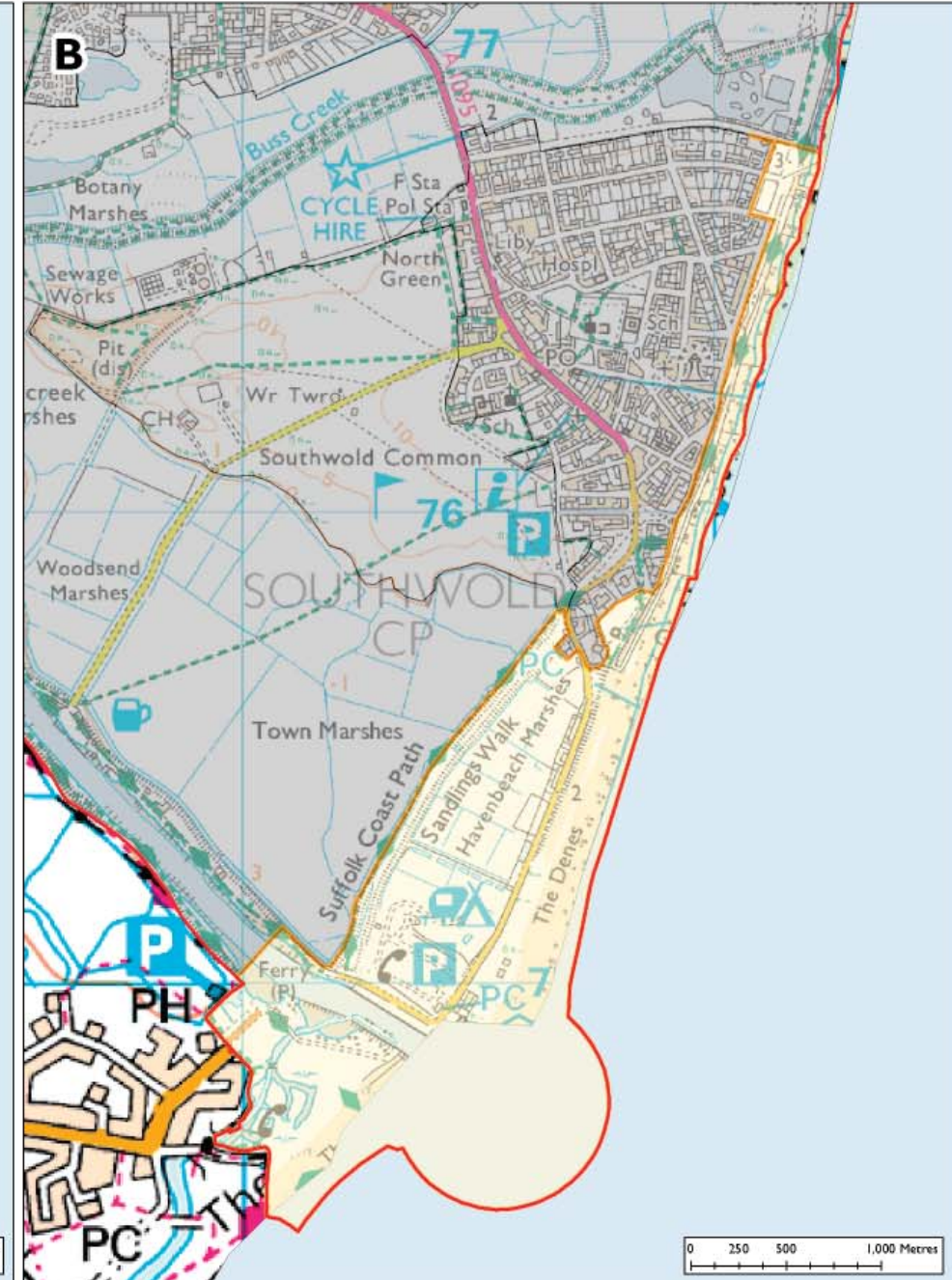
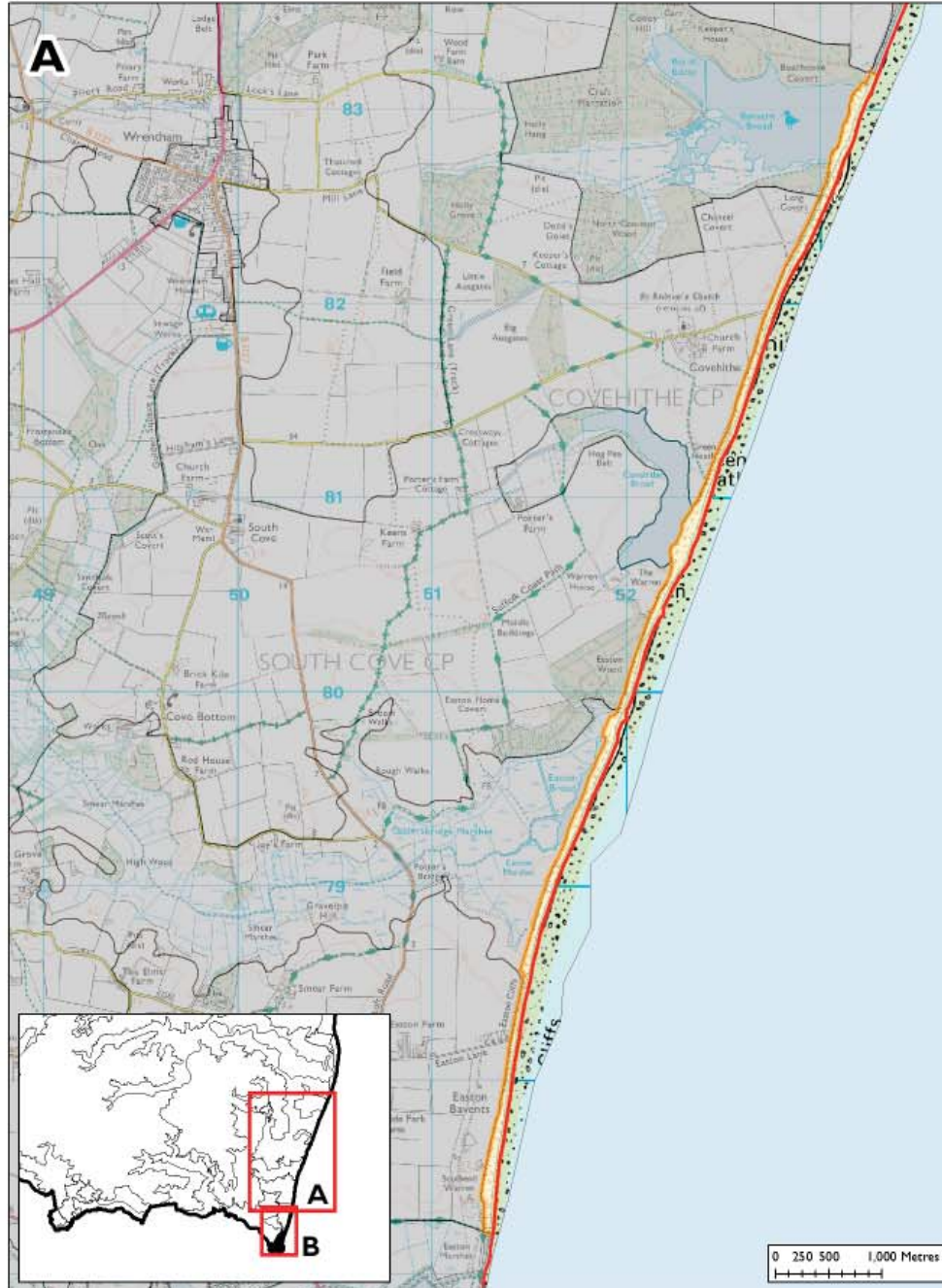
- FI.15 **The primary strategic objective for this character area is to conserve and enhance the remote coastal character and its associated biodiversity and geodiversity interest.**

### ***Landscape management***

- FI.16 The principal land management objective is to conserve the open setting of the coastal edge.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- FI.17 The remote undeveloped coastline south of Kessingland should be conserved. Glimpses of the coast and open gaps between Lowestoft and Kessingland should similarly be conserved.



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## F2: SOUTHWOLD COAST

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### Location and Boundaries

F2.1 *Southwold Coast* forms the southern sweep of coastline within Waveney District. It extends from north of the Blyth Estuary, encompassing the low coastal cliffs of Southwold and includes the coastal spits to the east of the marshes and coastal broads at Covehithe and Benacre. The character area falls entirely within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, and is fringed by the hinterland formed by area K1: *North Suffolk Sandlings* to the north. The area forms part of the *Sandlings with agriculture* and *Estuary with drained marsh* landscape types within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Assessment.

### Key Characteristics

- A Crag – Sand bedrock geology is overlain with sand and gravel beach deposits, in addition to tidal flats and silt/clay deposits. The bedrock is apparent in the low, erosion prone Crag coastal cliffs at Southwold;
- A coastal landscape with little landform variation other than the dunes to the south of Southwold and the Crag cliffs. Topography reaches 10m AOD to the clifftops;
- Acid, sandy soils overlay glaciofluvial drift deposits, creating a landscape of grassy dunes and sandy beaches. To the north of the cliffs shingle spits are often evident near the mouth of minor tidal estuaries e.g. the Hundred, and at Pottersbridge Marshes;
- Principal landcover is that of duneland to the south of Southwold, with localised areas of scrubby woodland beyond, in addition to areas of coastal marsh. Saline plant species such as tree lupins are a distinctive element of the shingle beaches;
- Panoramic views are available across the coastal marsh to the south as far as Aldburgh, with Sizewell A and B Power Stations forming a prominent element of these views;
- The geomorphological interest and ecological value of the coastal landscape north of Southwold is internationally recognised, with the Crag cliffs forming part of Pakefield to Easton Bavents SSSI and the coast providing breeding/overwintering habitat for a varied range of bird species, forming part of the Benacre SPA and SAC;
- Principal historic features of the character area include the clifftop town of Southwold which is built around a network of greens and a prominent 15<sup>th</sup> Century Church. The inland lighthouse is distinctive;
- Southwold is a traditional, low key seaside resort, with a promenade, pier and lines of colourful beach huts. The influence of coastal development is extremely

limited outside of the town itself, and is contained by the cliffs to the north and the estuary to the south;

- The coast has a wild and windswept, exposed quality and a strongly ephemeral visual character due to tidal movement, reflected light and the influence of the weather;
- Evidence of recreational use is provided by the coastal resort of Southwold, although the coast has a tranquil and often remote character.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- F2.2 A coastal landscape created by a Crag - sand bedrock geology overlain with beach deposits of sands and gravels, in addition to areas of tidal flats and deposition of silts and clays. Bedrock geology and localised landform variation is apparent in the low Crag coastal cliffs at Easton, where topography reaches 10m AOD. The town of Southwold and associated common occupy a low sandy outcrop. There is otherwise little topographic variation, with much of the character area lying at sea level.
- F2.3 Glaciofluvial drift deposits are overlain with acid, sandy soils, creating a landscape of grassy dunes and sandy beaches. Shingle spits are also apparent at points to the north of Southwold, particularly to the network of tidal estuaries which open onto the coast.
- F2.4 Principal landcover elements are the dunes to the south of Southwold, which are juxtaposed with small scale areas of scrub inland towards the coastal marshes associated with the Blyth Estuary. Sandy and shingle beaches and spits are evident to the seaward side, with saline plant species such as tree lupin and sea kale often apparent.
- F2.5 The cliffs at Easton which form the backdrop to part of the coast are recognised as being of outstanding geological interest through their designation as part of the Pakefield and Easton Barents Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This is designated for the geological composition of the low cliffs between Easton Broad and Southwold, which represent the three principal elements or strata of the Norwich Crag geological formation, with the basal sands of the Crag rich in marine mollusc and vertebrate remains. Vegetated shingle beds and nesses supporting an assemblage of plant communities including marram grasses are also a notable feature of the SSSI.
- F2.6 Southwold Coast forms part of the Benacre SPA and SAC, the coastal/shingle vegetation and marshlands of which provide breeding habitat for bird species such as bittern and marsh harrier.
- F2.7 The dunes at Southwold are identified as falling within a Core Area by the Ecological Network Mapping Project.



## **Historic Character**

- F2.8 Principal historic processes with landscape expression which have been identified by the Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) include 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure of the heaths and marshes which form the hinterland to the character area. Much of the area, being coastal habitat, is classed as 'unimproved land'.
- F2.9 Hodskinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk identifies the compact, nucleated cliff top town of Southwold and shows a wind pump in the marshes to the south west. The canalised mouth of the Blyth Estuary at Southwold Harbour is also apparent, as are the low coastal cliffs at Easton, with Reydon Common (subsequently lost to Enclosure) extending to the coastal clifftops.
- F2.10 Key extant elements of the historic and cultural landscape include the working harbour at Southwold and the associated low key 'antiquarian' 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century resort town of Southwold, together with the inland lighthouse and the Victorian pier and promenade.

## **Settlement and Built Character**

- F2.11 Primary settlement influences are the compact and low key town of Southwold, which is contained by landform and the estuary and is characterised by an intimate spatial scale in terms of streets and building heights, with much 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Georgian and Regency building centred on a network of greens and commons. The 15<sup>th</sup> Century church of St Edmund and its tall west tower form a focus for the settlement as does the distinctive white lighthouse of 1890. The seafront is defined by understated resort development, including a terrace of Regency houses at Centre Cliff, in addition to the Victorian promenade, pier and lines of colourful beach huts.
- F2.12 Outside of Southwold the only other settlement influences are the historic, working harbour which was largely rebuilt in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The water tower on the sandy hinterland behind Southwold is a prominent built element within the landscape.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- F2.13 This is a simple, often wild coastal landscape of big skies and defined by panoramic views across a windswept, exposed coast to an ephemeral seascape characterised by tidal movement and associated changes in the quality of reflected light and shadow. The town of Southwold forms the backdrop to views from the Blyth Estuary and the harbour. Southwold Pier forms a prominent element in views to the north, whilst at some distance to the south Sizewell A and B are clearly visible on the skyline. Skylines are otherwise of a simple and uncluttered character.
- F2.14 Containment, shelter and textural variation is created by the duneland and marram grasses to the south of Southwold, in addition to areas of regenerating scrubby woodland on the inland faces of the dunes.
- F2.15 A landscape of often intact and elemental coastal character, occasionally marred by localised areas of landfill which have been used to create coastal defences at points.



- F2.16 Low key, traditional resort development at Southwold creates localised variation, introducing a sense of seasonal movement and activity to an often remote, peaceful landscape. Southwold has a unified character which adds to the strong sense of place evident in this part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

## **EVALUATION**

- F2.17 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- The compact, low key clifftop settlement of Southwold and associated 19<sup>th</sup> century 'resort development' including the pier and promenade;
- The low Crag cliffs at Easton which are of significant ecological and geological interest;
- Duneland landscape and dune systems which create a wild quality and strong sense of place;
- A transient, ever changing seascape which is the result of tidal activity and coastal erosion;
- Southwold Harbour which remains as an active, working harbour.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- F2.18 Key visual sensitivities include the broad, panoramic views from the coast, including to the resort and pier at Southwold and further along the coast to the south, to Sizewell A and B Power Stations. A number of prominent skyline elements punctuate the landscape, such as the tower of St Edmund's Church and Southwold Lighthouse, creating a distinctive backdrop. Panoramic views from the Blyth Estuary back towards Southwold are another key visual sensitivity, as is the wooded backdrop created by the *North Suffolk Sandlings* which form the hinterland to Southwold.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- F2.19 This is a landscape of largely intact coastal character, with a clear sense of place created by the Crag coastal cliffs, dunes and dune grassland which fringe the compact settlement of Southwold. Influence of settlement and coastal resort development is sparse outside of Southwold.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Coastal erosion;
- Low key resort and seafront development within Southwold;

- Areas of landfill which have been used to create localised 'coastal defences'.

### ***Potential Future Change***

F2.20 Potential future change will arise through climate change and associated rise of sea levels and salt water ingress. The character of this stretch of coastline and the setting of Southwold and the harbour is vulnerable to and dependent on actions taken to implement the future Shoreline Management Plan. The Shoreline Management Plan for the coast to the north of Lowestoft advocates a longer term approach based on no active intervention and it is likely that this would be the approach adopted in the Management Plan for parts of this stretch of the coastline.

### ***Strategic Objectives***

F2.21 **The primary strategic objective for this character area is to conserve and enhance the wild, elemental coastal character, which is largely uninterrupted by resort development or artificial coastlines/defences. A sustainable approach to future flood management should aim to retain the wild coastal character which is intrinsic to the character of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. The traditional and low key character of the coastal town of Southwold should be conserved.**

**Conservation should also encompass the range of coastal habitats within the character area such as dunes and marshland which have significant biodiversity value.**

### ***Landscape Management***

F2.22 Primary landscape management considerations relate to conservation of the dune systems and associated duneland habitat, in addition to conservation of the Crag cliff face for its geological and ecological interest, although it is recognised that this is highly vulnerable to coastal erosion and will ultimately be lost. The seascape of simple, uninterrupted skylines should be conserved.

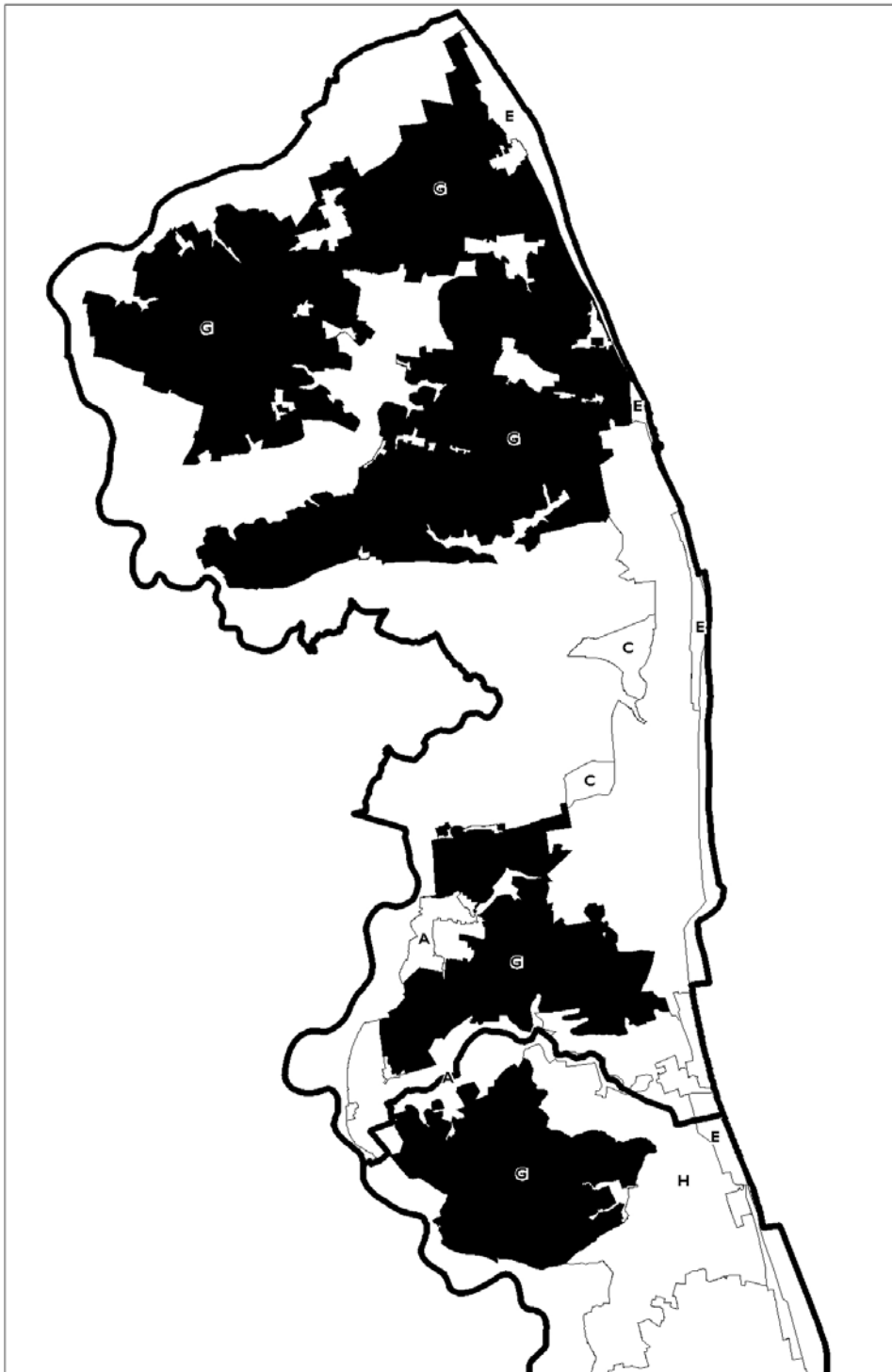
### ***Considerations in relation to development***

F2.23 Development considerations should conserve the contained, traditional vernacular character of Southwold and the sense of understated resort development which complements rather than impinges upon coastal landscape character. As such any future approach to coastal defences should respect this local character, avoiding artificial defences which would alter the character of the coast. The existing level of recreational access to the area should be conserved.



## G: SETTLED FARMLAND

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- G The boundaries of this landscape type are defined by the extent of glaciofluvial drift deposits of diamicton, sands and gravels, by low lying, gently undulating landform and

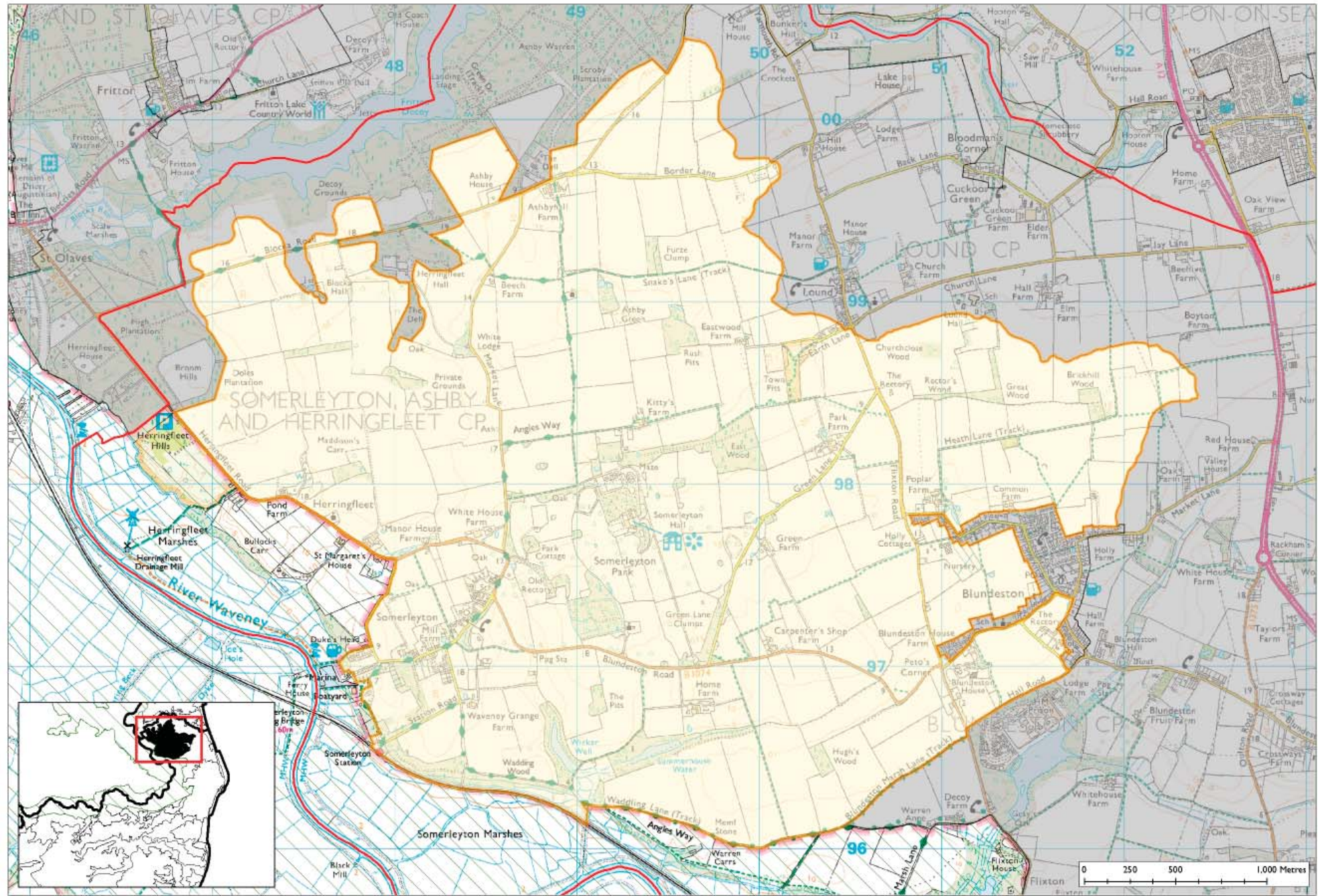
by the influence of settlement, in addition to the historic landscape pattern created by minor estates and Parliamentary Enclosure. The landscape type is represented by five local character areas, of which one lies within Waveney District, with the remainder within Great Yarmouth Borough.

### Key Characteristics

- A Crag bedrock geology, overlain with glacio fluvial and Aeolian drift deposits of sands, gravels and diamicton;
- A low, lying gently undulating landform , with topography ranging from 10-20m AOD;
- The influence of minor estates and associated architecture, farms and landscape management is apparent to varying degrees;
- Landscape fabric and pattern is that of Parliamentary Enclosure although the density and intactness of field boundary vegetation is variable, with intensive arable cultivation often apparent;
- Subtle landform variation and variable density of field boundaries often result in wide panoramic views, although this varies according to the intactness of the landscape structure;
- Considerable intervisibility is available to vertical structures such as wind turbines and to a lesser extent coastal landscape types and seascapes.
- The wet woodlands of the Broads often form the backdrop to character areas within this type, and the areas similarly form a setting to the Broads;
- Strongly settled character, defined both by compact traditional hamlets and estate villages and by expanded/linked coastal fringe villages;
- A landscape type of highly variable tranquillity and perceptual attributes due to the character of settlement edges, the presence of structures such as wind turbines and infrastructure e.g. road corridors.

<b>Landscape Type G: Settled Farmland</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<i>G1</i>	<i>East Flegg Settled Farmland</i>
<i>G2</i>	<i>West Flegg Settled Farmland</i>
<i>G3</i>	<i>Ormesby and Filby Settled Farmland</i>
<i>G4</i>	<i>Hobland Settled Farmland</i>
<b>G5</b>	<b>Somerleyton Settled Farmland</b>





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## G5: SOMERLEYTON SETTLED FARMLAND

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### Location and Boundaries

G5.1 *Somerleyton Settled Farmland* is an area of slightly elevated farmland rising to the north east of the Broads. It is wholly within Waveney District. The area is characterised by arable farmland with a strong parkland estate influence at Somerleyton. Marshland and lowland wetland within the Broads Authority Executive Area define the extent of the character area to the south and west, while the eastern extent is defined by lower lying *Tributary Farmland* around Blundeston. To the north the boundary is defined by woodland associated with the Waveney Valley.

### Key Characteristics

- The Crag bedrock geology is overlain by a mix of drift deposits of diamicton in the higher areas and sands and gravels;
- A gently undulating landform, with topography ranging from 5m adjoining the adjacent river/Broad landscapes and rising to a central low plateau of approximately 20m AOD;
- Deep well drained coarse loamy soils create a fertile landscape which is predominantly under arable cultivation with areas of pasture associated with parkland as well as some paddocks adjacent to settlements;
- Small blocks and belts of woodland both broadleaved and conifer plantation area associated with the Estate landscape create an enclosed 'wooded' character;
- The field pattern is distinct being almost entirely early (pre 18th century) to the south and east of Somerleyton Park, with later enclosure of former common and heathland to the north and west;
- Fields are medium to large scale, with fields defined by hedgerows of variable quality. Large mature stag-headed oaks are a key feature;
- Crossed by a network of small rural lanes, frequently enclosed by high bracken covered banks creating a semblance of a 'heathy' character;
- The perception of the landscape varies from enclosed and intimate travelling along the banked rural lanes to more open on some areas of farmland;
- Somerleyton Hall is a listed Jacobean style mansion, surrounded by a Grade II\* parkland. There are no views of the house from the wider landscape outside the parkland, although gate houses, lodges and an estate church are distinctive built features;
- Pine clumps and ornamental trees contribute to the strong parkland character, with notable entrance avenue to Somerleyton Hall and distinct red brick wall boundary containing the parkland;

- Some long views into across the adjacent low lying pasture and wetland landscape of the Broads and reciprocal views back with this area forming a low partially wooded skyline;
- Unusual model estate village at Somerleyton to the south-west of the park, built around a square green with houses of brick and thatch and distinct estate vernacular with maroon paint;
- Relatively sparse settlement with the modern extended linear village at Blundeston and occasional isolated large farms, including some good vernacular farm buildings of red brick thatched barns;
- Blundeston has associations with Dickens and formed one of the locations in *David Copperfield*;
- Distinct isolated churches with towers form prominent landmarks in views and are notable in views from the lower lying Broads landscape;
- An essentially peaceful, rural landscape, seemingly well managed and intact character.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- G5.2 The bedrock geology of Crag- Sand and gravel is overlain with drift deposits including sands and gravels which are particularly associated with the land to the north-west sloping towards the adjacent *Waveney Rural Wooded Valley* character area. To the south and east is a more mixed drift geology of sands, gravels and diamicton. The landform is gently undulating with topography ranging from 5m adjoining the adjacent river/Broad landscapes and rising to a central low plateau of approximately 20m AOD.
- G5.3 Free draining coarse loamy soils associated with the drift deposits have given rise to a fertile landscape which has been extensively exploited for arable cultivation. Fields are medium to large scale and defined by hedgerows of variable quality. Large mature stag-headed oaks are a key feature. In addition to the hedgerows, small blocks and belts of woodland both broadleaved and conifer plantation area associated with the Estate landscape create an enclosed 'wooded' character in places.
- G5.4 Much of the character area is given over to arable cultivation, with ecological interest associated with field boundaries and arable habitats. The character area lies within a heathland, grass and woodland region (for habitat enhancement and recreation) within the EcoNet Project. It also forms part of the Broads buffer area.

### Historic Character

- G5.5 The key historic feature of the landscape is Somerleyton Park, which is Grade II\* on the English Heritage Register. The Park comprises a 19<sup>th</sup> century formal garden partly by Nesfield, with pleasure gardens and walled gardens, set within a deer park of 17<sup>th</sup> Century origins with 19<sup>th</sup> Century alterations. Principal landscape features of

the park include dense woodland screening belts to the north and east, plantations and tree clumps as well as the distinctive perimeter wall, gate house and views.

- G5.6 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a varied enclosure pattern. The area south and west of Somerleyton is pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure, with irregular co-axial fields, a pattern which remains largely intact. To the north and west field boundary consist of 18<sup>th</sup> century and later enclosure of former common arable and heathland. In visual terms there is relatively little difference in the boundary pattern.
- G5.7 Distinct isolated churches with towers form prominent landmarks in views and are notable in views from the lower lying Broads landscape as at Herringfleet.
- G5.8 Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk shows a number of areas of commonland within the area, in addition to Somerleyton Hall and associated woodlands. There is no extant heathland remaining within the area today, apart from vestiges of an acid-heathy vegetation associated with some verges and boundaries.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- G5.9 The area is relatively sparsely settled. It includes the village at Blundeston, renowned for its association with Dickens and the novel *David Copperfield*. The village has a core of vernacular red brick and colour render buildings and retains a circular pound used in the past to impound stray animals. The village is now much extended with more modern development.
- G5.10 Somerleyton is a distinctive model estate village (designed by John Thomas in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century) located to the south-west of the park, built around a rectangular green with houses of brick and thatch and distinct estate vernacular with maroon paint. The village is located at the edge of the park at the border with Somerleyton Marshes and the River Waveney (part of the Broads) and there is a small marina providing access into this wetland landscape. At Somerleyton Park, the principal building is Somerleyton Hall – a grand mansion in Jacobean style although this is not visible from the wider landscape, as a result of landform and dense tree planting. Other built features associated with the park and visible in the wider landscape include the church, low red brick perimeter wall and impressive gatehouses.
- G5.11 The area is crossed by a relatively sparse network of rural lanes, connecting occasional isolated large farms associated with Somerleyton Estate. It includes some particularly good examples of red brick thatched barns which are key features of the rural landscape. At Herringfleet, the Norman round tower church is a prominent feature and stands on the slopes above and commanding views over the low lying wetland landscape of the Waveney Valley (part of the Broads).

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- G5.12 This is a landscape of relatively intact visual character and aesthetic quality. Most areas are enclosed and contained by field boundaries, small woodland blocks and mature hedgerow trees, with well managed intact parkland at Somerleyton. The sense of enclosure is enhanced when the landscape is viewed from embanked/semi-sunken rural lanes. In contrast, at some high points there are longer views, as well as

occasional views out across the adjacent Broads as at Herringfleet and the area itself forms a rural setting in some views up from the Broads.

G5.13 It is an essentially peaceful, rural landscape with an intact, managed character.

## **EVALUATION**

G5.14 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Grade II\* listed historic parkland at Somerleyton and associated estate features including the estate village and woodland features;
- The intact field boundary hedgerows and surviving hedgerow oaks indicating pre and post 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure;
- The enclosed character created by the sparse network of embanked 'heathy' lanes which represent the historic landscape fabric and route pattern;
- The role of the landscape as the setting and view from the Broads with subtle wooded skylines and parkland setting at Somerleyton;
- The peaceful, sparsely settled rural character.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

G5.15 This is mostly a contained, enclosed landscape. There are some longer distance views and within these, the round tower and towered churches are key features and land marks. A key visual sensitivity is the views across the Broads from Herringfleet and associated views back from the Broads in which this area forms a wooded and rural setting with churches forming key skyline features. At Somerleyton Park there are some long open views down to the Broads and the Park similarly forms a strong landscape setting in views back from the Broads.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

G5.16 This is an intact managed agricultural/estate landscape of good condition and quality. It has good tree cover, notably associated with the Park, as well as an intact pattern of hedgerows with hedgerow trees.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Development of the landscape park at Somerleyton;
- Pre and post 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure with the latter taking in former common arable and heathland;
- Some twentieth century agricultural intensification and boundary loss.

- Settlement expansion at Blundeston.

### ***Potential Future Change***

G5.17 Future change will largely result be dependent on changes to management of the agricultural landscape for example demand for different crops types such as biofuels. Climate change may not only initiate crop change but also result in a more arid landscape with demands for irrigation. In the future the loss of mature oaks from the hedgerows may also result in a significant landscape change. The area is relatively sparsely settled and apart from minor infill associated with the existing settlement further extensive development is not likely to occur.

### ***Strategic Objectives***

G5.18 **The principal strategic objective for the character area is to conserve the peaceful rural landscape with its structure of Enclosure hedgerows providing a sense of spatial scale and containment, in addition to opportunities for habitat connectivity and linkages. The Somerleyton estate landscape comprising parkland elements/features and the distinct estate vernacular should also be conserved. The area should continue to provide a rural backdrop and skyline to the adjacent Broads.**

### ***Landscape Management***

G5.19 Principal considerations in respect of landscape management are to reinforce existing field boundary hedgerows. Remaining hedgerow and field oaks are often mature and consideration should therefore be given to new tree planting to maintain and enhance continuity as existing mature trees reach senescence. There is a further need to conserve and reinforce elements of the parkland landscape. The area should continue to provide a rural, 'wooded' setting in views from the Broads.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

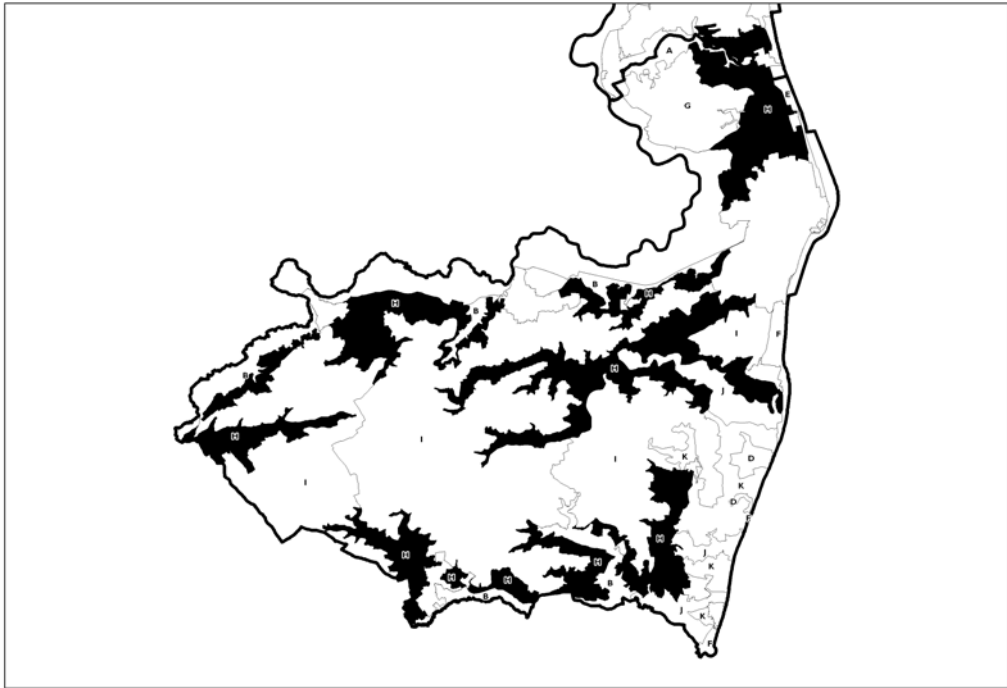
G5.20 Primary considerations in relation to development are to conserve the sparsely settled rural character of the area. The distinctive intact estate vernacular of Somerleyton village should be conserved. There may be opportunities to provide better landscape integration of the modern settlement edge of Blundeston. The setting and views to the landmark churches should be conserved, as should views from the Broads to largely undeveloped slopes and skylines.





## H: TRIBUTARY VALLEY FARMLAND

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- H This landscape type is associated with the transition between the plateau landscapes and the river valleys, encompassing a range of wetland features associated with the network of minor tributary drains which cut the landscape and which drain the principal rivers. An undulating landform has resulted, limiting intervisibility with other landscape types.

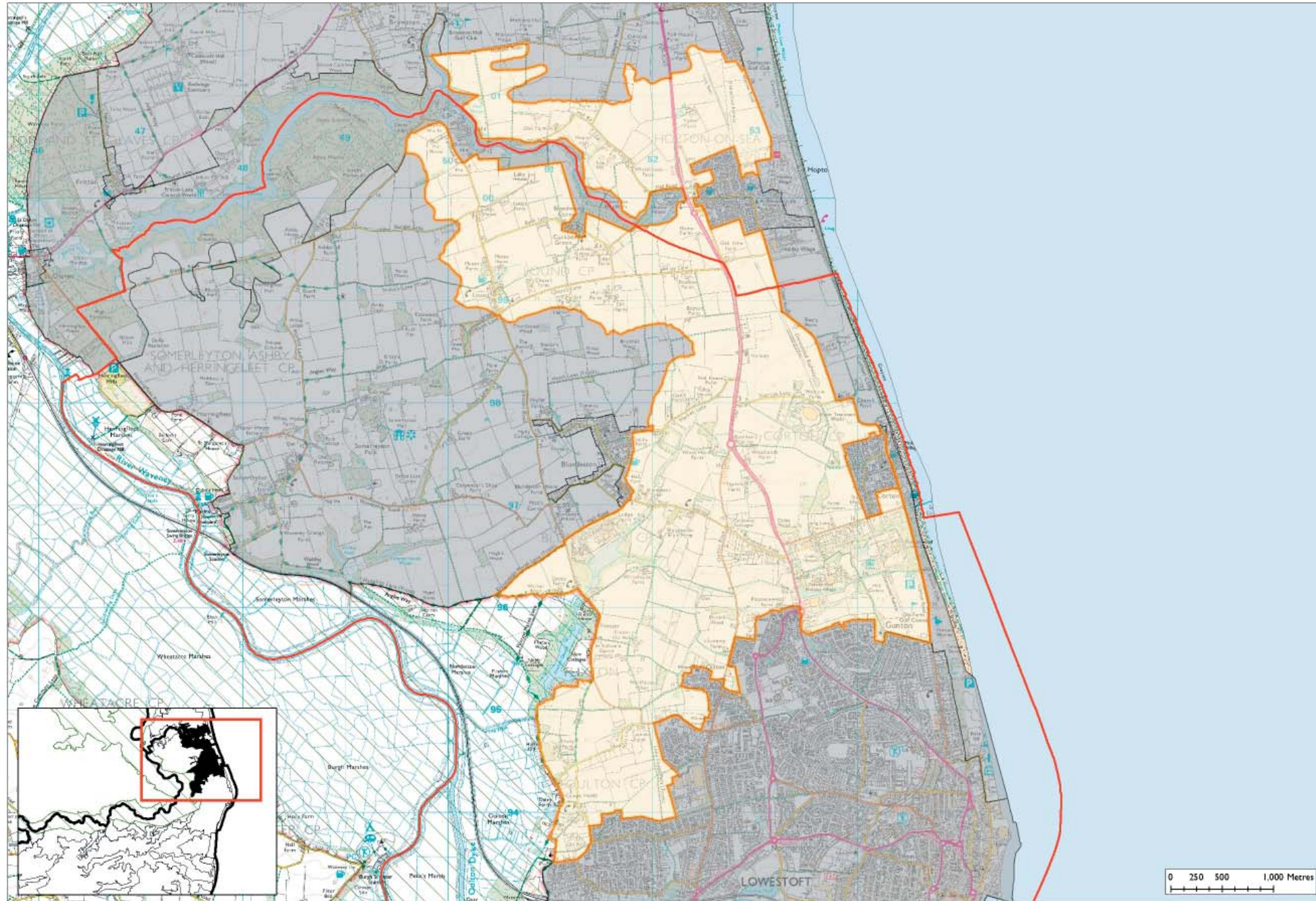
### Key Characteristics

- A Crag bedrock geology is overlain with sand and gravel drift deposits;
- An undulating landform, cut by minor tributary watercourses and with topography ranging from 5-30m AOD;
- An Enclosure field pattern of often rectilinear formation and varying scale, with arable cultivation predominating, although pasture, rough grazing and wet grassland are also apparent to the margins of tributary watercourses;
- White painted bridges where tributary watercourses are crossed by the rural road network are distinctive elements, and often the only visible indicator of the watercourses;
- Views are often framed or contained by rolling/undulating landform and by field boundary vegetation;

- Landscapes within this type are often of settled character, with nucleated villages and compact linear hamlets associated with a network of rural roads.

<b>Landscape Type H: Tributary Valley Farmland</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>H1</b>	<b>Blundeston Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H2</b>	<b>Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H3</b>	<b>Hundred Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H4</b>	<b>Mid Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H5</b>	<b>Sconch Beck and Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H6</b>	<b>Blyth Tributary Valley Farmland</b>
<b>H7</b>	<b>Blyth and Wang Tributary Valley Farmland</b>





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# HI: BLUNDESTON TRIBUTARY VALLEY FARMLAND

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## Location and Boundaries

HI.1 *Blundeston Tributary Valley Farmland* straddles the boundary between Great Yarmouth Borough and Waveney District with the majority of the area falling within Waveney District, this description applies to the whole area. The area is defined by an undulating landform cut by tributaries which drain into decoy ponds at Flixton. The southern edge is bounded by Lowestoft with the eastern edges defined by coastal settlement at Great Yarmouth. The Broads Authority and Oulton Marshes north of Lowestoft form part of the western edge.

## Key Characteristics

- A Crag bedrock geology is overlain with drift deposits of Corton sands and gravels to the north and Lowestoft Till and Diamicton to the south with seams of clay, silt and gravel underlying tributaries;
- An undulating landform is created by the tributaries which cut the landscape and drain westwards into decoy ponds at Fritton and Flixton before reaching the River Waveney. Farm ponds are characteristic of higher land;
- Arable fields cover higher land whilst fields of wet grazing pasture, marsh and carr woodland characterise low lying land, notably at Flixton Decoy;
- Small farm woodlands are scattered over the landscape with the dense carr woodland of *Waveney Rural Wooded Valley* fringing the character area to the north at Browston Green;
- A network of hedgerows and ditches creates a small scale landscape pattern in the south giving way to larger field patterns towards the north;
- Local ecological value is represented by woodland at Parkhill and Corton and meadows at Gunton and Whitehouse Farm (County Wildlife Sites);
- Views are contained by rolling landform and wooded skylines which enclose a small to medium scale landscape;
- Views of the seascape are intermittent between settlement gaps at Corton and Hopton-on-Sea and are often restricted by field boundary vegetation and topography. Despite the proximity of the coast there is little coastal influence on the character area;
- The settlement edges of Lowestoft, Corton and Great Yarmouth create an urbanising influence and encompass resort type development, with tranquillity interrupted by the A12 corridor;



- A prison at Blundeston located on Flixton Decoy and a water treatment works at Corton are large scale features that are contained by well wooded edges.
- Key historic features include Blundeston Hall and moat and the remains of St Andrews Church at Flixton, (all Scheduled Monuments). Remnant parklands associated with Halls such as Gunton Hall also add to the historic landscape structure;
- Blundeston village, within the adjacent *Somerleyton Settled Farmland* forms part of the western edge of the area and is well known for its Dickensian associations, having formed one of the locations in *David Copperfield*;
- The remnants of the Lowestoft-Great Yarmouth railway dissects the area along the eastern edge with evidence of related earthworks in places;
- A diverse landscape mosaic providing textural and seasonal variation with lowland wet grazing and marsh vegetation alongside carr woodland and associated watercourses.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- H1.2 A Crag bedrock geology is overlain with glacio fluvial drift deposits of sands and gravels. Landform is gently undulating, with topography ranging from 5m AOD to 20m AOD. Tributary watercourses cut the landscape at Hopton-on-Sea and Blundeston where they drain westwards into the River Waveney via Decoys at Fritton and Flixton.
- H1.3 Soils include well drained sandy acidic soils prone to water erosion and give rise to a landscape defined by pasture and arable cultivation. The close proximity of the River Waveney and associated tributaries results in bands of diamicton and silt deposits giving rise to areas of marsh and carr woodland which fringe watercourses.
- H1.4 Landcover is influenced by pre 18<sup>th</sup> century Parliamentary Enclosure characterised by a co axial field pattern throughout the majority of the area. A small scale field boundary pattern persists in the south becoming slightly more eroded towards the north. Mixed woodland is evident to more elevated areas. Parkland exists south of Corton where Gunton Hall formerly had a marked influence on the historic landscape pattern in this area.
- H1.5 A wetland character is created by Decoy ponds at Flixton and at Fritton in the adjacent *Somerleyton Settled Farmland*, together with the tributaries that cut the character area and drain into the River Waveney. Wet ditches and small farm ponds are also a particular feature of the southern part of the area.
- H1.6 The Ecological Network Mapping Project identifies the southern part of the area as falling within the 1km Broads Buffer region as well as the tributary at Flixton forming part of the Strategic River corridor and wetland habitat zone. The entire character area is identified as a Heath Wood and Grass region.

## **Historic Character**

- HI.7 The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have influenced the character of the landscape including pre 18<sup>th</sup> century Parliamentary Enclosure in the southern and central areas with post 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural intensification resulting in a larger field boundary pattern in area fringing settlements towards the north.
- HI.8 Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk identifies large areas of commonland that once covered much of the character area, notably along the *Waveney Rural Wooded Valley* and within the settlements of Corton and Blundeston, of which Furze Common at Blundeston is all that remains.
- HI.9 Gunton Hall is located north of Lowestoft and was built in 1742 on the site of an earlier house. The Hall and estate highlights an era of prosperity in Suffolk, with lakes, kitchen gardens and extensive parklands developing over the centuries. The Norman round towered church of St Peter's adds to the historic setting to the south. The Hall is now part of a holiday resort and retains some of the historic landscape structure, though much of the parkland has been returned to agriculture. Estate influences can also be seen at Blundeston and Flixton Hall though only the buildings themselves remain with little evidence of parklands.
- HI.10 Other elements of the cultural landscape include the Norman round towered church of St Peter, in addition to a moated site and the remains of St Andrew's Church at Flixton (registered SMRs) and the Grade II\* listed ruins of St Margaret's Church at Hopton-on-Sea.

## **Settlement and Built Character**

- HI.11 A settled landscape lying between the towns of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth and encompassing the once linear, now increasingly expanded coastal fishing villages of Corton and Hopton-on-Sea. These villages are now popular coastal resorts. Settlement cores demonstrate some evidence of the use of traditional red brick, however much of current settlement is as a result of modern infill. Isolated round towered churches exist on settlement edges e.g. at Corton and highlight settlement shrinkage.
- HI.12 Blundeston Prison and a water treatment works at Corton are notable built features. Both are well concealed and screened by dense woodland. The village of Blundeston fringes the character area on the western edge.
- HI.13 The A12 dissects the character area forming a significant link between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, which fringe the area to the north and south respectively.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- HI.14 This is a well contained landscape to the south with views framed by a rolling landform and significant tree cover due to tributary valleys and remnant woodland and field boundaries. A more exposed field boundary structure exists towards the north as a result of 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural intensification.

- HI.15 Despite close proximity to the coast views of the seascape are limited and occur intermittently along the A12 between settlements. The ruined church of St Margaret at Hopton-on Sea is visible and lies within the gap between Gorleston and Hopton. Intervisibility to the west into the neighbouring *Somerleyton Settled Farmland* character area is greater though also restricted by woodland fringing the tributary valleys.
- HI.16 The A12 has an impact on tranquillity as it forms a key transport corridor that dissects the character area from north to south. However, to the west there is a strong sense of peacefulness where farmsteads are served by a network of narrow rural roads.
- HI.17 A varied landscape influenced by the wetland character of tributaries coupled with elevated agricultural areas provided a diverse mosaic of rush, marsh, woodland and open fields varying considerably throughout the seasons and providing a landscape rich in colour, texture and movement.

## **EVALUATION**

- HI.18 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Tributaries and associated Decoy ponds and carr woodland at Flixton providing valuable wetland habitats and localised variety;
- Small farm woodlands and small scale intricate field patterns highlighting the historic Enclosure landscape pattern;
- Remnant parkland and historical features at Gunton and Blundeston adding to the historic landscape character and illustrating the influence of estates on the landscape;
- Church towers which form historic markers within the landscape.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- HI.19 Key visual sensitivities are the gaps which occur between settlements along the coast at Hopton-on-Sea and Corton, which provide rare open views to the coast at points. The wooded skylines associated to the tributary valleys and woodland blocks are judged sensitive, as are field boundary networks, which provide a sense of enclosure.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- HI.20 A managed productive agricultural landscape with some parkland/estate influences. Southern and central areas have retained a more cohesive landscape structure where small to medium scale field boundaries are interspersed with mature hedgerow trees and patches of mixed and deciduous woodland. A more eroded character exists in the north. Tributaries and decoy ponds thread the landscape from the west and provide wetland margins of ecological interest.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century Parliamentary Enclosure which created the irregular co axial field pattern;
- Creation of Decoy ponds within tributary valleys;
- Expanding settlement edges as a result of growing tourist industry and construction of A12 dual carriageway.

### ***Potential Future Change***

HI.21 Potential future change may arise through agri environment schemes such as hedgerow enhancement and reinstatement. Renewable energy demands and biofuel cropping may have an impact on the character of arable areas. Climate change and rising sea levels will result in farmland and coastal developments along the eastern edge being at risk from flooding.

### **Strategic Objectives**

HI.22 **Primary objectives are to conserve and enhance the landscape structure notably the small scale wetland character associated with the minor tributary watercourses which link to the wetlands of Flixton Decoy and the River Waveney valley system, and to conserve and enhance the landscape pattern created by the field boundary hedgerow network. Historical elements such as parkland should also be conserved and enhanced. Where open views are available to the coast (and the ruined church at Hopton-on-Sea) these should be conserved.**

### ***Landscape Management***

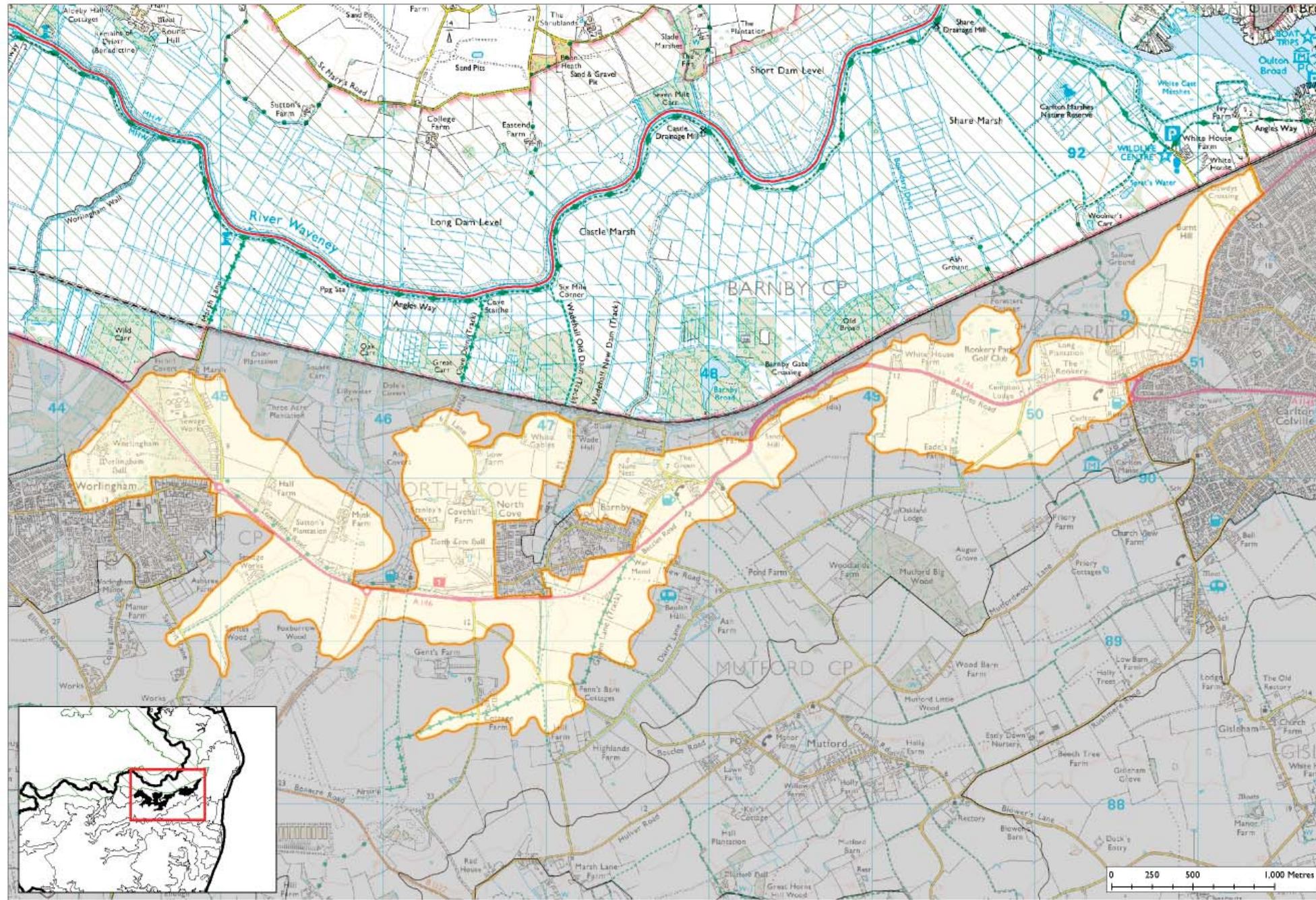
HI.23 Key landscape management considerations should be to conserve and enhance existing field boundary vegetation, woodlands and wetland elements, promoting the replanting of hedgerow tree species such as oak and elm.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

HI.24 Development considerations relate primarily to the open coastal edges between settlements e.g. between Hopton-on-Sea and Corton and retaining this visual relationship with the coastal landscapes. Use native planting to integrate the edge of larger settlements such as Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft with the landscape structure.











## H2: WAVENEY TRIBUTARY VALLEY FARMLAND

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### Location and Boundaries

H2.1 *Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland* is located to the south side of *Waveney Valley*. It forms a narrow swathe of farmland separated from the Broads Authority Executive Area by small areas of the Waveney Valley floodplain. The character area slopes gently towards the floodplain of the Waveney Valley, and is defined by an undulating landform, with the 15m AOD contour marking the outer extents of the character area, where it joins the more elevated landform of *Saints Plateau - East*.

### Key Characteristics

- A bedrock geology of Norwich Crag is overlain with glaciofluvial drift deposits of sand and gravels and cut by minor tributaries. Peats are associated with low lying areas;
- Topography ranges from 5m AOD to the boundary with the adjacent Waveney Valley, to 15m AOD to the adjacent plateau;
- Well drained, sandy soils associated with glaciofluvial drift material create a fertile landscape under predominantly arable cultivation. In lower lying areas flood prone peat based soils (associated with peat deposits) are evident;
- Landcover pattern is that of Enclosure field boundary hedgerows with hedgerow trees, with arable fields of irregular formation and medium to large scale, in addition to some areas of rough grazing;
- A sparsely wooded landscape with few other structural landscape features, creating wide views occasionally framed by field boundary vegetation. There are occasional views across the Waveney Valley Floodplain and the Broads;
- Occasional wooded strips and small scale farm coverts are distinctive landscape features, as is the wooded parkland setting of Worlingham Hall;
- The visual influence of wet field boundary ditches and tributary drains is subtly apparent across the character area;
- Principal elements of the cultural landscape are the hall and associated minor parkland at Worlingham and North Cove, in addition to the isolated thatched church at Barnby;
- The character area is fringed to the east and west respectively by the settlement edges of Lowestoft and Beccles, with Barnby representing the principal settlement within the area;
- A simple arable landscape with little variation, but forming part of the landscape setting of the Broads. Influence of settlement is marked to the east and west of the area and tranquillity is reduced by the A146 which crosses the area;

- Evidence of recreational usage is provided by the golf course at Rookery Park.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- H2.2 Glacial meltwaters left glacio fluvial deposits of sands and gravels overlaying the Norwich Crag bedrock within the area. A gently undulating landform characterises the area, with topography ranging from 5m AOD to the boundary with the *Waveney Valley* to 15m AOD to the boundary with the adjacent *Saints Plateau – East* character area. Peat deposits are associated with the low lying areas adjacent to the *Waveney Valley*.
- H2.3 Soils include erosion prone, sandy, well drained acid soils associated with the glacio fluvial drift deposits, in addition to areas of peat soils at the transition with the adjacent *Waveney Valley*. The sandy soils are predominantly under arable cultivation, with occasional areas of rough grazing and paddocks.
- H2.4 Landcover pattern is that of Parliamentary Enclosure, with an enlarged and partially eroded field boundary pattern resulting from 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification, although recent hedgerow planting is apparent in places. An irregular network of medium to large scale fields is defined by mixed native hedgerows of variable density, with mature hedgerow trees including oaks often apparent, notably to the lanes which traverse the character area. Tributary drains and ditches are more subtle boundary features.
- H2.5 The Ecological Network Mapping Project (EcoNet) identifies the western part of the character area as falling within a General Enhancement Area for reinforcing linkages and connectivity. Much of the character area also forms part of the 1km buffer zone for the internationally designated wetlands of the Broads, with the Broads north of Barnby forming part of the Broadland RAMSAR site and Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Opportunities for heathland creation are identified between Beccles and North Cove by the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project.

### Historic Character

- H2.6 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have influenced the character of the landscape, including early (pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century) Enclosure on the low lying farmlands adjacent to the *Waveney Valley*. Post 1950 agricultural change/intensification is apparent in the more elevated land to the southern part of the character area.
- H2.7 Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk covers the northern and western parts of *Waveney District*, and identifies areas of commonland and woodland straddling the edge of the *Waveney Valley* to the east of Barnby, although these have been lost to later Enclosure. References to the former woodland are however perpetuated in the names Rookery Park and The Rookery. Faden also identifies a low key rural road network threading through the character area and this is largely extant today.

H2.8 Principal extant features of the cultural landscape are the wooded parkland setting of Worlingham Hall (remodelled in Regency style, c.1800) and the minor estate and five bay brick built Georgian hall at North Cove.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

H2.9 This landscape has a relatively settled quality, with the influence of the settlement edges of Lowestoft and Beccles apparent to the eastern and western edges of the character area respectively. The principal settlement within the character area is Barnby, originally a village of compact nucleated formation (Faden, 1797) but which has now significantly increased in size, with a mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century extension at North Cove. Evidence of vernacular character within Barnby is provided by the distinctive, isolated 14<sup>th</sup> Century thatched church of St John Baptist, with a number of dwellings exhibiting red brick and clay pantile. The farmhouse at Ash Farm displays some 16<sup>th</sup> Century/Jacobean work.

H2.10 The character area is crossed by a network of narrow rural lanes, some of which are sunken and bounded by intermittent hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The A146 Beccles Road is a prominent feature of the character area and extends the influence of settlement.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

H2.11 The predominant landcover of arable agriculture and the eroded landscape structure create a landscape of simple composition and relatively little textural variation. The simplicity of the landscape and combination of few landscape elements results in a muted colour palette, albeit one which is subject to seasonal variation due to arable cropping.

H2.12 Views are open and semi panoramic at points, and framed where a more intact field boundary hedgerow pattern persists. Localised, framed views are possible across the lowland river and broadland landscape of Waveney Valley, whilst recent development to the edge of Lowestoft within the character area is visible from within the Broads. As such the character area forms part of the setting of the Broads.

H2.13 Skylines within the character area are often of simple, uniform character (arable fields and hedgerows rising up to the plateau to the south), with few vertical elements to break up the horizon.

H2.14 A rural landscape, although tranquillity is markedly reduced by the presence of settlement edges and the A146 corridor. The golf course at Rookery Park adds to the sense of the 'edge' character which is apparent at points, as do areas of paddocks.

## **EVALUATION**

H2.15 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

## **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Remaining areas of parkland, such as at North Cove and Worlingham;
- Isolated churches of traditional thatched roof construction (e.g. Barnby) which act as foci within the landscape;
- Surviving field boundary hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees, which indicate historic Enclosure landscape structure, in addition to new hedgerow planting which reinforces the landscape framework;
- Field boundary tributary drains and ditches which provide localised, small scale variation in the landscape;
- Simple, uniform character of the skyline.

## **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

H2.16 Key visual sensitivities are the localised and framed views into the adjacent *Waveney Valley* character area, and the function of the area as part of the setting of the Broads. Few visually dominant landmarks punctuate the skyline, resulting in a horizon of simple, continuous character.

## **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

H2.17 This is a productive arable landscape which displays some intact landscape structure and Enclosure field patterns in places. However it has become fragmented in light of agricultural intensification and has become divided due to the presence of the A146 corridor. It displays an 'edge' influence at points due to the proximity to large settlements at Lowestoft and Beccles.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Parliamentary Enclosure and loss of commons;
- New extension to the village of Barnby (North Cove);
- Evolution of the Beccles Road into a significant transport corridor (A146);
- Agricultural intensification, arable cultivation and fragmentation of the field boundary network.

### ***Potential Future Change***

H2.18 Future incremental growth may occur to the edges of settlements, affecting the outer extents of the character area. Flooding and flood storage needs in light of climate change will increasingly become an issue in the lower lying parts of the character area. This is a predominantly arable landscape and therefore any future changes in crops such as biofuels may be visually significant.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- H2.19 **Key strategic objectives within this rural landscape are to contain the extent of the large settlements of Beccles and Lowestoft, and to conserve the skyline and landscape function of the area as the setting of the Broads. The wetland character associated with the tributary watercourses should be conserved and enhanced, seeking opportunities to create/enhance wetland linkages.**

## ***Landscape Management***

- H2.20 Principal objectives are to manage existing mature hedgerow trees, and trees lining the network of rural lanes, to ensure continuity of cover. Further new native hedgerow tree planting, in addition to the new hedgerow planting which is already taking place, should be implemented to enhance habitat connectivity and to plan for the senescence of existing mature to over mature trees. Enhance field boundary drains and ditches as a more legible wetland feature and to enhance visual connectivity with adjacent wetland landscapes e.g. the Broads.

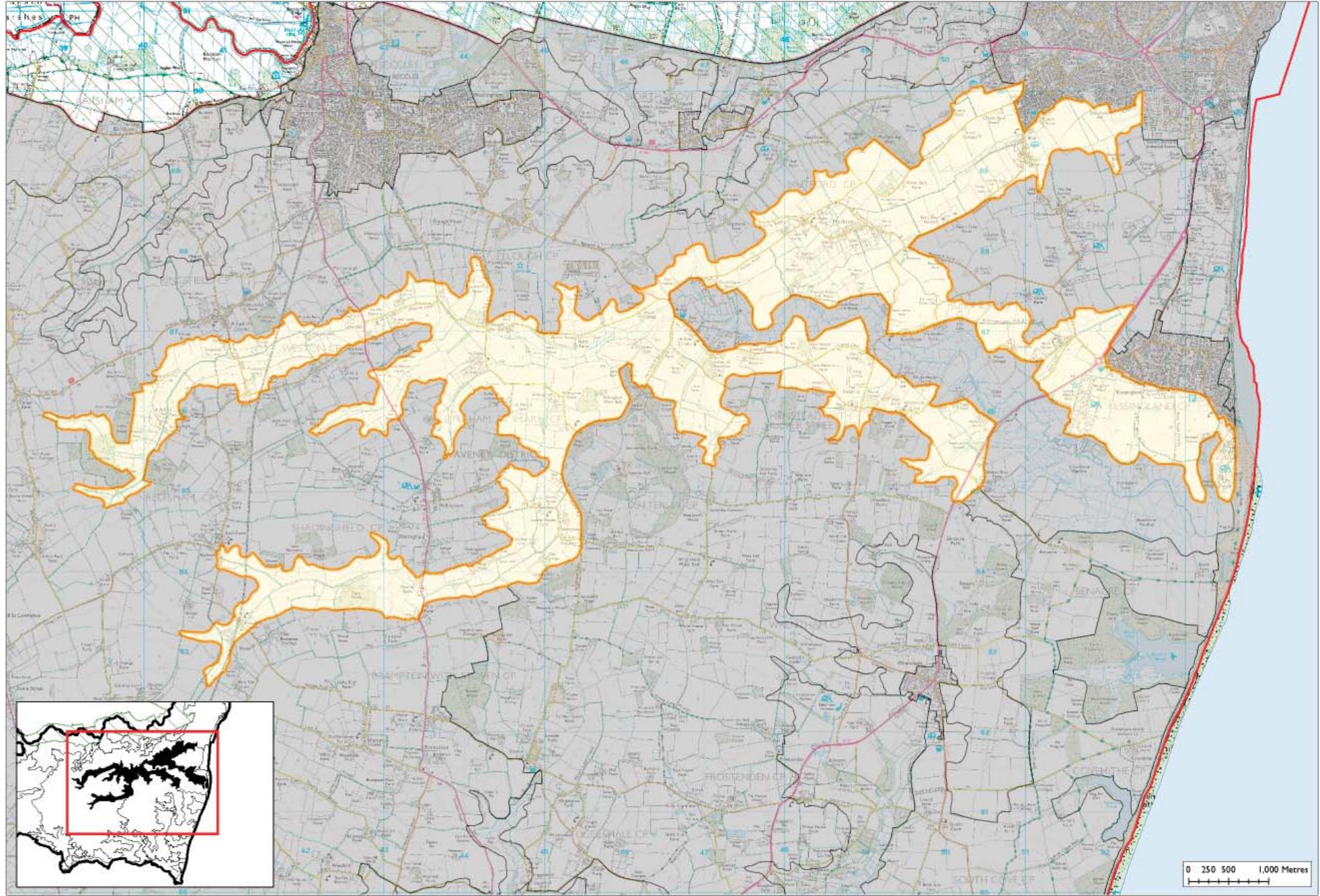
## ***Considerations in relation to development***

- H2.21 This is a landscape which is already influenced by development and settlement influences. Future growth should avoid creating exposed or lit settlement edges, particularly in the context of the landscape setting of the Broads, and should use existing landform and field boundary vegetation to integrate, in addition to new native planting. In light of the intrusions and disturbance created to tranquillity by the A146, consideration should be given to native planting along this corridor to fulfil an attenuation function.









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## H3: HUNDRED TRIBUTARY VALLEY FARMLAND

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### Location and Boundaries

H3.1 *Hundred Tributary Valley Farmland* is an area of undulating farmland cut by tributaries draining into the minor Hundred River. The boundary is defined by the 10-20m AOD contour as it borders the adjacent plateau areas. Encircling *Hundred River Marshes*, the character area forms the transition between the marshes and elevated plateaux.

### Key Characteristics

- A Crag bedrock geology of sands and gravels is overlain by drift deposits of Lowestoft Tills and Alluvium. The small tributaries that cut through the landscape have deposited sands and gravels;
- Well drained sandy soils are coarse and loamy within low lying land with slowly permeable subsoils which are prone to waterlogging;
- Tributaries cut into the landscape from the edges of the plateau creating a gently undulating landform ranging from 5-20m AOD covered by medium scale geometric pastoral and arable fields;
- Swathes of wet woodland and hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees alongside wet ditches and tributaries define medium scale geometric pastoral fields boundaries;
- Wet meadows and rough grazing occur in low lying areas adjacent to the minor watercourse of the Hundred River whilst arable fields and patches of deciduous and mixed woodland form the transitional edge with the adjoining farmland plateaux;
- Ancient woodland at Titsal Wood in the western end of the character area is designated SSSI due to its ecological value as an area of hornbeam woodland;
- Local ecological value is represented by woodland at Willingham and meadow at New House Farm (County Wildlife Sites);
- A small to medium scale landscape with views framed by hedgerow vegetation and rolling landform although there is intervisibility with the adjacent estuarine valley floor at *Hundred River Marshes*;
- Sparsely settled with scattered farmsteads varying in age and small hamlets linked by sunken lanes including linear (Mutford) and nucleated (Henstead). Both are low density and demonstrate traditional the vernacular character of red brick and pantiles with occasional thatched buildings;
- The exposed settlement edges of Kessingland and Lowestoft fringe the eastern fingers of the character area adjacent to the coast and reduces the otherwise tranquil nature of the character area;

- Isolated knapped flint churches are often all that remains of past settlements, and frequently form focal elements of wooded skylines;
- Principal historic elements of the landscape include numerous 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Halls found at Ellough, Weston and Mutford which all contribute to the historic landscape character;
- A textured landscape, with a varied landscape mosaic composed of a variety of landcover elements, with pasture and wet grassland juxtaposed with woodland and arable fields.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- H3.2 Glacio fluvial drift deposits of Lowestoft Tills and Alluvium overlay a Crag bedrock geology of sands and gravels. Tributaries which thread westwards into neighbouring plateau claylands are underlain by bands of sand, clay and peat. The influence of tributary drains results in a subtly rolling landform ranging from 5m AOD at Ellough to 20m AOD adjoining the elevated plateau.
- H3.3 Low lying areas along the valley bottom are characterised by well drained sandy soils, susceptible to occasional waterlogging with more elevated areas composed of slowly permeable mainly calcareous soils. Farm ponds are a common feature and dot the landscape in more elevated areas.
- H3.4 Landcover is predominantly under pastoral cultivation with larger arable fields occurring along the sides of the minor Hundred River. Field boundaries are defined by a small scale geometric wet ditch network along the valley bottom with more mature hedgerows including hedgerow trees characterising field boundaries to more elevated areas. Vegetation cover ranges from swathes of wet woodland and rough grazing lining wet ditches whilst blocks of mature mixed and deciduous woodland (including patches of Ancient woodland) form the transitional edge with the adjoining *Saints Plateau - East and Sotterley and Benacre Plateau* character areas. Ecological value is recognised through multiple County Wildlife Sites notably towards the western end of the area at Willingham Wood and Great/Briery Woods at Ringsfield.
- H3.5 The Ecological Network Mapping Project (ECONET) identifies much of the western fingers of the area as a Grassland Core Area representing both existing and future enhancement of valued habitats. Tributaries that cut into neighbouring plateaus (also to the west) are identified as Wetland Habitat Zones. The Wetland Habitat Zone also encompasses much of the *Hundred River Marshes* character area to the east which represents valuable wetland and marsh habitats.

### Historic Character

- H3.6 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies a number of historic processes which have had expression in the present day landscape character. These include early 18<sup>th</sup> century Enclosure, covering much of the western and more elevated areas with a co axial field pattern. Post 1950s agricultural development

occurred towards major settlements in the east. This results in a more eroded field boundary pattern and larger arable fields as a result of agricultural intensification. Areas of meadow and managed wetland thread the valley bottom from the east.

- H3.7 Historic elements of particular interest are numerous 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Halls as found at Ellough, Weston and Mutford. The estate influences of Sotterley and Benacre Estate in neighbouring *Sotterley and Benacre Plateau* character area also contribute to the historic character.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- H3.8 This is a sparsely settled landscape characterised by small farmsteads and hamlets, often nucleated on rural road junctions such as Ellough and Henstead. They demonstrate local vernacular through the use of red brick and pantile. The slightly larger settlements of Hulver Street and Mutford follow a linear pattern and demonstrate similar built character coupled with some more urban influences.
- H3.9 The northern and eastern ends of the character area border the settlements of Lowestoft and Kessingland resulting in a more apparent urban edge character at these points.
- H3.10 Knapped flint churches dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> Century are often isolated from settlements and well screened by mature trees, their square turreted towers rising above treetops are often all that identifies their presence.
- H3.11 The character area is served by a network of rural roads which are often semi sunken and lined by dense hedgerows. The A12 crosses the area to the east.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- H3.12 An undulating landscape of a small to medium scale is characterised by framed views contained by landform and vegetation. Intervisibility with adjacent plateau areas occurs along the valley crest where views are panoramic and characterised by wooded skylines and big skies. Intervisibility with the adjacent marshes to the east is limited.
- H3.13 Small settlements and hamlets add to a varied landscape mosaic where wetland elements such as tributaries and carr woodland are coupled with pasture and mature woodland. This is a tranquil, unified landscape with a strong rural character. Rural roads add movement and activity but do not detract from this sense of tranquillity.

## **EVALUATION**

- H3.14 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Tributaries and woodland swathes that thread the landscape creating valuable wetland habitats/significant landcover;



- Small scale field boundary networks interspersed with mature/veteran hedgerow trees demonstrating historic landscape processes such as Enclosure;
- Traditional villages and hamlets characterised by vernacular character such as thatch, red brick and pantile add to local distinctiveness;
- Churches which form foci for settlements;
- Narrow rural road networks frequently semi sunken and lined by hedgerows and mature hedgerow oaks add to the intimate and small to medium scale landscape structure.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

H3.15 Key visual sensitivities include views to and the setting of church towers which are often visible above woodland skylines, notably towards Sotterley Estate. Intervisibility with adjoining exposed plateau claylands, where views are often panoramic and composed of few elements, are sensitive to additional large scale features. Industrial buildings at Ellough (within the adjacent plateau area) are a dominant feature of views from adjoining character areas.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

H3.16 This is a managed productive landscape showing evidence of boundary loss towards the northern and eastern ends of the character area. Characterised by agricultural use it is composed of a variety of landcover elements resulting in an intricate landscape mosaic. The influence of the Hundred River results in an ecologically varied wetland landscape along the valley bottom strongly linked with adjoining marshlands to the east and identified within the Ecological Network Mapping Project as a Wetland Habitat Zone.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- The Enclosure Acts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries resulting in the coaxial field pattern evident on the valley sides;
- The influence of various halls and estates on the historic landscape management and character;
- Boundary loss through 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural intensification notably loss of hedgerows and mature hedgerow oaks;
- Expansion of settlements such as Lowestoft and Kessingland.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

H3.17 Potential future change may arise though the settlement growth of Lowestoft and Kessingland to the edge of the area. Rising water levels in light of climate change will have a significant impact on the character area posing a potential threat to farmsteads

and hamlets located close to the valley bottom, notably towards the eastern end towards the coast. Agricultural diversification may also change current landuse and agricultural practices with the introduction of crops such as hemp.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- H3.18 The primary strategic objectives for the character area are to conserve and enhance the textured landscape quality and the varied landcover elements such as wet meadows, woodland, grazing pasture and hedgerows. The network of tributaries linking to the Hundred Estuary and associated wetland landscape should be conserved and enhanced. Consideration should be given to the creation of further freshwater habitats in light of rising sea levels and salt water ingress at the coast.**

**Key views featuring wooded skylines and isolated church towers should be conserved.**

### ***Landscape Management***

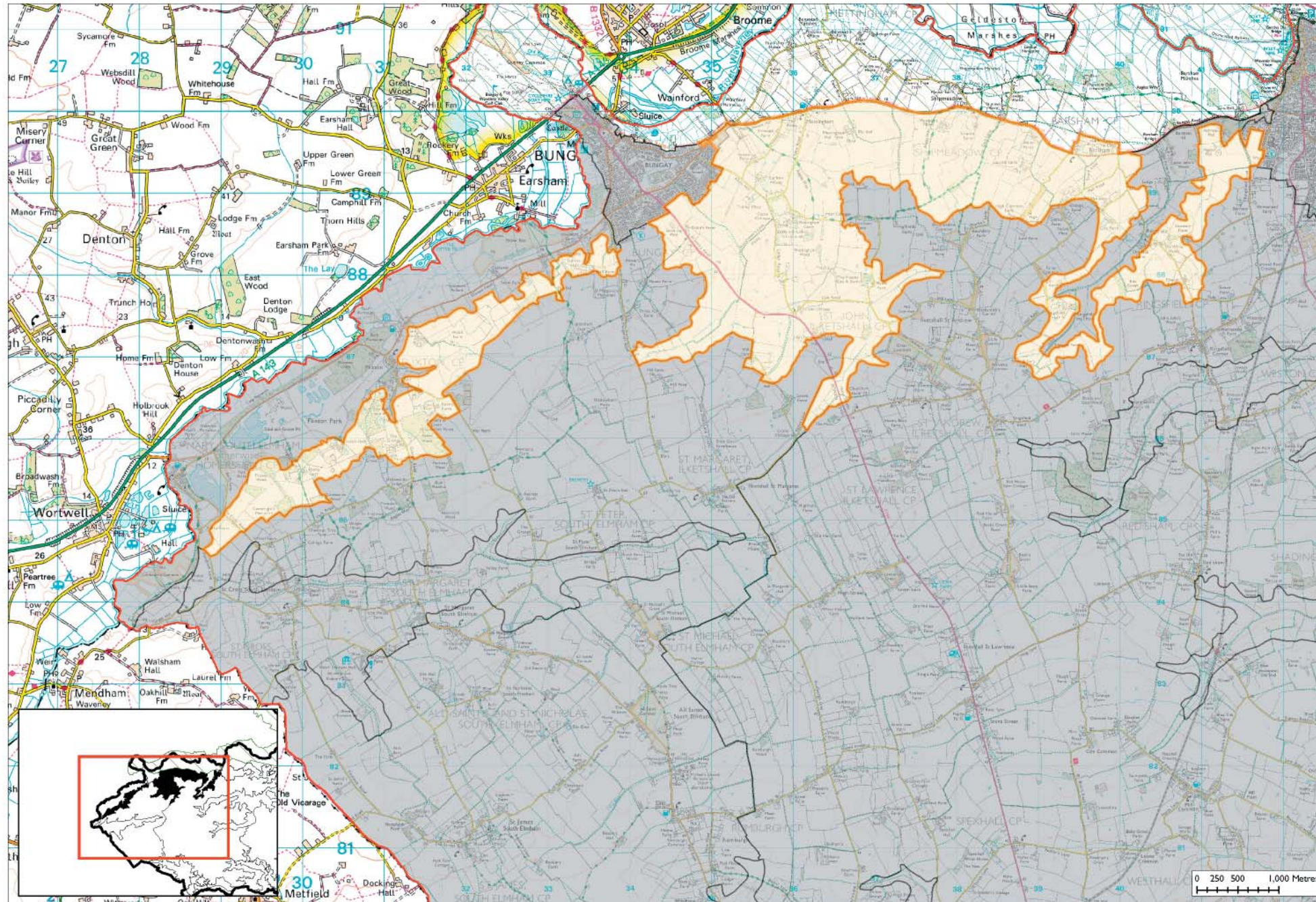
- H3.19 Principal objectives are to manage existing hedgerow boundaries encouraging replanting (notably of hedgerow trees such as oak and elm) enhancing new habitat linkages and restoring the historic landscape pattern. The management and re creation of wetland features along the tributaries and wet ditches should be encouraged.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- H3.20 Conserve and protect sensitive panoramic woodland skylines, notably where intervisibility with neighbouring plateau claylands persists. Development associated with the growth of settlements such as Lowestoft and Kessingland should be sensitive to the wider rural character of the area. Building styles and uses within rural areas should respect local character. Conserve the views to, and the settings of, churches.







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## H4: MID WAVENEY TRIBUTARY VALLEY FARMLAND

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### Location and Boundaries

H4.1 *Mid Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland* lies along the southern edge of the Waveney River Valley between the settlements of Bungay and Beccles. The character area is defined by the 15-20m AOD contour to the valley edge and by the 30-35m AOD contour at the transition with the adjacent plateau. The landform of the area is cut by tributaries draining into the River Waveney. It forms part of the landscape setting of the Broads abutting the Broads Authority boundary along much of its length.

### Key Characteristics

- A Crag bedrock geology is overlain with drift deposits including Lowestoft Tills and sands;
- Topography ranges from 10m AOD to the Waveney Valley edge to 30-35m AOD to the adjoining Plateau areas. A gently rolling landform becomes steeper at Ringsfield and on the outskirts of Bungay;
- Views are framed and contained by the rolling landform and field boundary vegetation that covers the river valley sides and borders rural roads and tracks. Glimpsed views are available at points across the wide, flat Waveney Valley within the Broads;
- Small patches of woodland are scattered across the character area often surrounding settlements and fringing the adjacent Waveney Valley;
- Hedgerows line semi sunken rural roads and tracks, and hedgerow oaks are often distinctive, conspicuous features;
- Fields are under arable cultivation, interspersed with areas of pastoral and rough grazing. Defined by ditches and fragmented hedgerows they are of a small to medium scale around settlements, becoming larger towards the western end of the area;
- Tributaries draining into the Waveney also define the field boundary network and are distinctive features, as are farm ponds;
- Parts of the area demonstrate an estate influence notably around Mettingham Castle and Barsham where fragmented parkland remains alongside historic ruins;
- A network of rural lanes and tracks crosses the area, with the A144 dissecting the area where it adjoins the settlement edge at Bungay;
- Settlements are small, scattered and of nucleated formation. Isolated Saxo Norman thatched churches are a common historic feature notably at Mettingham, Barsham, Shipmeadow and St Johns;



- This is a tranquil rural area despite its close proximity to Beccles and Bungay.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- H4.2 Drift deposits of Lowestoft tills and sands overlay a bedrock geology of Crag – Sand. Topography ranges from 10m AOD where the area adjoins the Waveney Valley, to 30-35m AOD at the interface with the adjacent plateau areas. Landform is gently rolling although this becomes steeper and more distinct to the outskirts of Bungay. A number of northerly draining tributaries which feed the Waveney cut the landscape, creating further local topographic variation.
- H4.3 Slowly permeable calcareous soils are associated with chalky till drift deposits, creating a landscape often prone to waterlogging and flooding. Pasture and rough grazing are apparent to the network of tributary watercourses, but the predominant land use is that of arable cultivation. A series of irregular and partly geometric arable fields of co axial formation is set within a network of mixed native hedgerows, with mature hedgerow oaks often apparent. Hedgerow oaks are also conspicuous features of the semi sunken lanes which cross the character area. Localised, small scale blocks of woodland, often fringing historic elements such as minor parklands at Ringsfield Hall and Mettingham Castle, provide further landcover variety in this rolling predominantly agricultural landscape. At the micro scale, the arable farmland provides a variety of local habitats, whilst a patchwork of common lands is also evident. A small tributary stream to the north of Great Common is identified as a County Wildlife Site, as are a number of farm ponds at Barsham.
- H4.4 Ancient woodland at Abbey Wood SSSI is designated due to the varied flora including ancient and rare woodland species. The Ecological Network Mapping project identifies the character area as a Grassland Core Area as well as a General Enhancement Zone representing both existing and future enhancement of valued habitats. Fingers of the River Waveney thread into the character area from the east at Beccles as well as tributaries on the western end are which identified as Wetland Habitat Zones.
- H4.5 The area forms the backdrop to the Waveney Valley and the internationally designated wetlands of The Broads.

### Historic Character

- H4.6 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have had expression upon present day landscape character. These include early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure throughout the central part of the area, with an irregular co axial field pattern often apparent. This imparts a relatively historic quality at points, although mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification and attendant boundary loss is also apparent in the western and easternmost parts of the character area, where a larger scale field pattern persists.
- H4.7 Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk covers parts of the northern edge of the character area and identifies several areas of common land no longer extant notably at Mettingham

and within the river valley at Ringsfield straddling the *Waveney Valley* character area. However, commons south of Shipmeadow remain, and are part of an extensive patchwork of Common land found in the neighbouring *Saints Plateau- East*.

- H4.8 The settlements of Ilketshall St John and Mettingham fall within an area locally known as 'The Seven Parishes' during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries which extends in the adjoining *Saints Plateau- West* and *Saints Plateau- East* areas and includes Ilketshall St Andrew, St Lawrence, St Margaret together with All Saints, St Mary and Holy Trinity.
- H4.9 Historic elements of particular importance include Mettingham Castle, Barsham Hall and the Motte and Bailey Castle north west of Ilketshall St Andrew. John de Norwich built Mettingham castle during the reign of Edward III during the 14<sup>th</sup> Century; a college moved to the castle c. 1390. The most striking feature of the castle is the gatehouse and towers either side along with remnants of other buildings and walls. The Castle is surrounded by moats and parkland and provides a strong historic feature within the landscape.
- H4.10 The site of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Priory at Flixton and the wooded parklands of Flixton Hall and Boy's Hall are other notable features of the cultural landscape.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- H4.11 The valley town of Bungay abuts the north western edge of the area, although this is otherwise a sparsely settled landscape characterised by small villages of dispersed formation, often comprising of a small number of houses centred around a church (e.g. Barsham, Shipmeadow, Mettingham). Vernacular character is represented through the late medieval and pre 19<sup>th</sup> century periods and associated use of thatch, pantile and red brick with oxblood colour render to walls. Modern infill is sparse but where evident material use often shows a sensitivity to existing character.
- H4.12 Saxo Norman churches remain in use and act as focal point for these small villages. They are characterised by knapped flint and are frequently round towered and thatched. However, they do not form prominent skyline elements with towers often screened by trees.
- H4.13 Settlement edges often well wooded and when viewed from a distance are absorbed by the landform and wooded skylines.
- H4.14 Farms of varying ages are also scattered over the landscape and characterised by a mix of traditional red brick and pantiles alongside modern clad farm buildings and barns.

### **Perceptual and Visual Character**

- H4.15 An undulating landform and wooded tributary valley floors coupled with small scattered settlements creates a small to medium scale landscape mosaic. Views are often framed, contained by topography and vegetation but become more panoramic in higher areas and there is strong intervisibility with neighbouring plateau areas. Where the character area borders the Waveney Valley and Broads Authority to the north glimpses of the wider marsh landscape and areas of wet woodland are visible,

although views back into the character area from the Broads are often framed by woodland.

H4.16 An arable landscape, interspersed with areas of pasture, rough grazing, parkland and woodland with several historic features creates a landscape of texture and considerable seasonal variation and visual interest.

H4.17 A fairly complex network of small rural roads, tracks and footpaths results in a well used and active landscape. Despite this sense of movement a strong peaceful and rural character remains unaffected by the close proximity of the neighbouring towns of Beccles and Bungay, and the B1062.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

H4.18 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

- Veteran/over mature hedgerow trees (notably oak), which act as key structural elements of this intimate, scale landscape and contribute to the historic character;
- Mature woodlands at Flixton to the northern edge of the character area and which provide the setting for the adjacent Waveney Valley at this point.
- The co axial field pattern which persist at points, the legacy of early Enclosure;
- The influence of estates and structures such as Mettingham Castle, Flixton Hall and Barsham Hall result in a historic focus in the landscape;
- Narrow/sunken rural lanes often lined with mature hedgerows and hedgerow oaks contribute heavily to the wooded quality of the character area and add to a sense of enclosure and intimacy;
- Rural, tranquil character.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

H4.19 Key visual sensitivities include the framed views into the Broads, and the role of this area as part of the setting of the Broads in views from the Broads. The intimate scale of this contained landscape relies heavily upon the boundary network defined by ditches and hedgerows. Such wooded boundaries often form elements of settlement edges which are often well integrated within the landscape structure due to their low density character and absence of large vertical features. There is some intervisibility with adjacent plateau character areas from more elevated land.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

H4.20 This is a well managed and largely intact landscape showing evidence of hedgerow maintenance and replanting enhancing the landscape structure. The ecological quality

and value of the landscape is varied due to presence of farm ponds and wet ditches/tributaries.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- The monastic influence of the Augustinian Priory at Flixton, established in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century;
- The parkland influence of Flixton Hall estate and associated remnant designed landscape of wooded coverts and belts (to the edge of the area and partly within the adjacent *Waveney Valley* character area);
- The Enclosure Acts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries resulting in much of the small scale field patterns evident around settlements;
- Boundary loss through 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification notably hedgerow degradation and unmanaged ditches;
- Loss of Common land at Mettingham and Ringsfield to agricultural development and Enclosure;
- Settlement expansion on the valley sides e.g. at Bungay.

### **Potential Future Change**

H4.21 Valley settlements such as Bungay have already encroached upon the edge of the area. There may be demand for future development along the edges of existing settlements. Rising water levels in light of climate change may pose future risks of flooding, particularly to settlements adjacent to the Waveney Valley e.g. Shipmeadow, Barsham and Mettingham. This is a predominantly arable landscape and therefore any future changes in crops such as biofuels will be significant.

### **Strategic Objectives**

H4.22 **The primary strategic objective for the character area is to conserve and restore the network of tributary watercourses which cut through the landscape linking the Waveney Valley and the upland plateau. The landscape function of the area as the setting of the Broads should be conserved, as should the predominantly small scale pattern of settlement.**

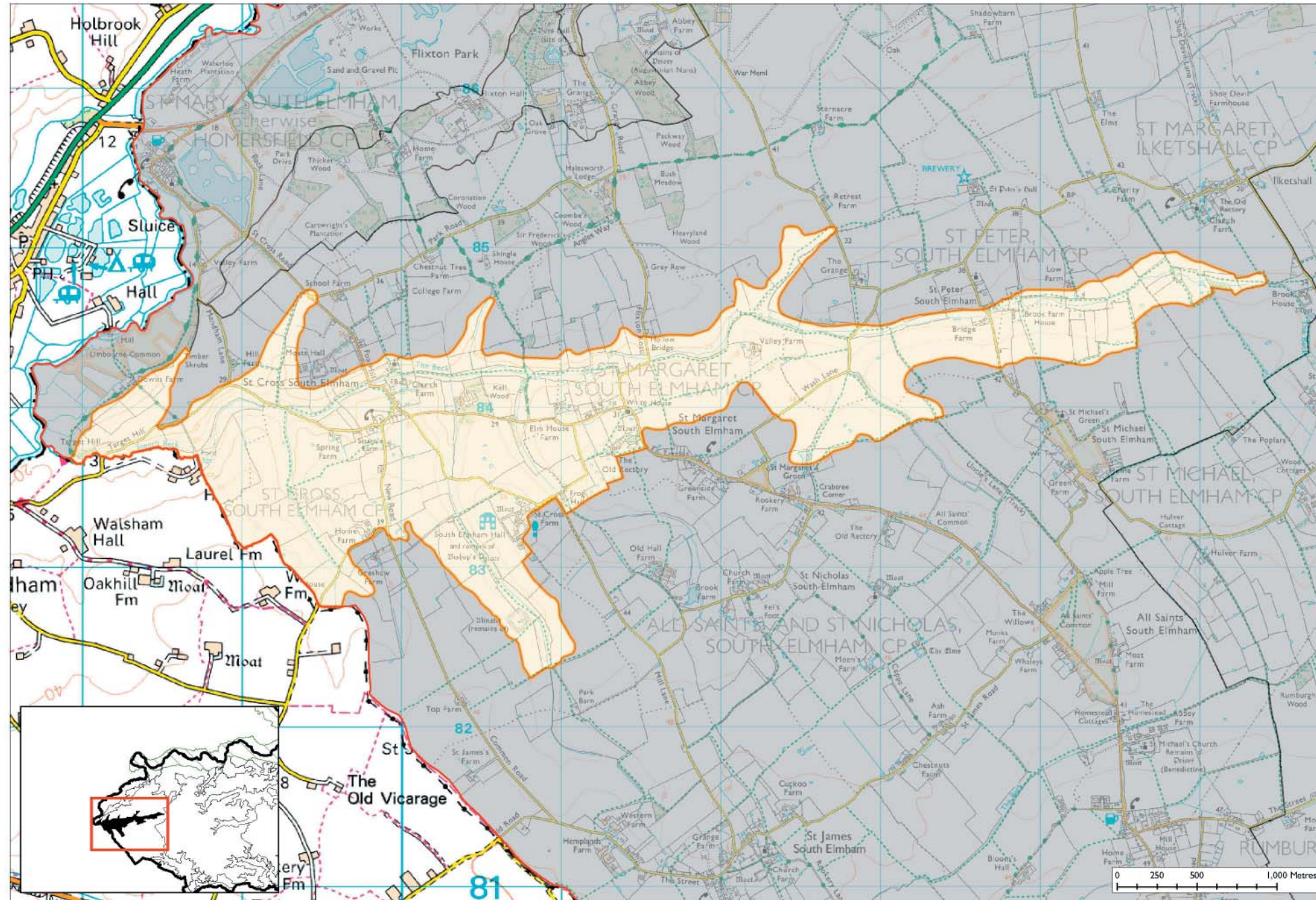
### ***Landscape Management***

H4.23 Principal objectives are to manage existing mature hedgerow trees, and trees lining the network of rural lanes, to ensure continuity of cover. Further new native hedgerow tree planting, in addition to the new hedgerow planting which is already taking place, should be implemented to enhance habitat connectivity and to plan for the senescence of existing mature to over mature trees. Enhance and restore tributary ditch networks as a more legible wetland feature and valued habitat. Conserve and enhance the setting of the Broads and the Waveney Valley. Conserve and enhance mature farm woodlands through active and appropriate management.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

H4.24 Development considerations relate to avoiding further encroachment from the valley towns in addition to avoiding the creation of exposed or lit settlement edges, particularly in the context of the landscape setting of the Broads. Use existing landform and field boundary vegetation to integrate settlement edges, in addition to new native planting. In light of the intrusion created by the B1062, consideration should be given to native planting along this corridor to fulfil an attenuation function. The historic feel imparted by Enclosure landscape fabric alongside key features such as Mettingham Castle should be protected and enhanced as a feature contributing to a strong sense of place.





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## H5: SCONCH BECK AND WAVENEY TRIBUTARY VALLEY FARMLAND

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### Location and Boundaries

H5.1 *Sconch Beck and Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland* is located in the western part of Waveney District, encircled by the adjacent *Saints Plateau - West* character area. The character area boundaries are defined by the 30m AOD contour, which marks the transition to the plateau, with the landscape type extending into the adjacent Mid Suffolk District. Sconch Beck tributary is within the area, draining westwards and ultimately into the Waveney Valley.

### Key Characteristics

- A bedrock geology of Crag – Sand is overlain by Lowestoft Till deposits, in addition to bands of sands and gravels of Lowestoft Formation, and clays, silts, sands and gravels;
- The character area is defined by an undulating landform, ranging from 20-30m AOD, and cut by minor tributaries draining the principal tributary of Sconch Beck and The Beck;
- Landform results in views of strongly contained character, although these are more open in elevated areas adjoining the plateau;
- Slowly permeable calcareous and clayey soils associated with chalky till drift deposits create a mixed agricultural landscape of pasture, rough grazing and arable cultivation, in addition to areas of wet meadow fringing tributaries. Springs and farm ponds are also distinctive;
- Landcover is that of arable agriculture with pasture associated with the minor tributaries which cut the character area. A geometric and partly co axial field pattern of small to medium scale provides a framework;
- Mixed Enclosure hedgerows with hedgerow trees provide landscape structure, as do areas of deciduous farm woodland as at Kell Wood, in addition to small scale blocks of coniferous plantation;
- Principal elements of the cultural landscape include the 16<sup>th</sup> Century house and associated parkland at South Elmham Hall, incorporating the remains of the former summer palace of the Bishops of Norwich, and the ruins of the ‘Minster’ church at South Elmham;
- A landscape of relatively intact landscape structure and textured, mosaic character in places. The smaller scale landscape pattern contrasts with the more eroded arable landscape in the central part of the area;
- Variation in colour and perceptual quality is provided by the areas of pasture and wet meadow which fringe the network of minor tributaries;

- A landscape with a remote, rural and sparsely settled quality, with only small traditional hamlets partially extending into the character area (e.g. South Elmham St Cross and South Elmham St Margaret);
- Isolated churches are a characteristic feature (South Elmham St Cross), as are traditional vernacular materials within the settlements including flint, clay pantile and oxblood colour render;
- Evidence of recreational access is provided by a network of rights of way, primarily along the course of Sconch Beck.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- H5.2 Lowestoft Till deposits overlay the Crag – Sand bedrock geology, together with bands of sands, gravels, clays and silts. Landform is undulating, with topography ranging from 20-30m AOD across the character area. Soils overlaying the till deposits are slowly permeable and of calcareous and clayey composition, creating a mixed agricultural landscape defined by pasture and rough grazing with areas under arable cultivation. Swathes of meadow and wet grassland fringing the tributaries that cut the landscape are a distinctive feature, as are farm ponds.
- H5.3 The landscape framework is created by a geometric and partly co axial Enclosure field boundary pattern of small to medium scale, defined by mixed hedgerows with hedgerow oak trees, including stag headed trees. Further landscape structure is created by blocks of deciduous farm woodland e.g. Kell Wood, in addition to occasional small scale blocks of coniferous plantation.
- H5.4 The entire character area is identified by the Ecological Network Mapping Project as falling within a grassland Core Area.

### **Historic Character**

- H5.5 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has identified a number of historic processes with landscape expression. These include pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure, of an irregular co axial field pattern in the western half of the character area. Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agriculture and attendant field boundary loss is evident to the eastern half of the character area.
- H5.6 Hodskinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk identifies the isolated church of St George South Elmham (now South Elmham St Cross) which is extant today. Elmham Hall (South Elmham Hall) is also identified on the 1783 Map. South Elmham Hall is a 16<sup>th</sup> Century house with stepped gable ends, and set in a minor parkland. The house incorporates much earlier fabric (the remains of the medieval summer residence of the Bishops of Norwich).
- H5.7 Other key elements of the cultural landscape include the enigmatic ruins of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century Saxon Minster Church (the 'cathedral') within the grounds of South Elmham Hall, and a moated site to the north west of South Elmham St Margaret.

## **Settlement and Built Character**

- H5.8 A sparsely settled landscape with settlement confined to small scale hamlets e.g. South Elmham St Margaret (partly outside the character area, with settlement primarily represented by the flint church and the Old Rectory). South Elmham St Cross, in the western part of the area, is a settlement of now greatly reduced size, with only the church and a small number of dwellings now evident.
- H5.9 Principal vernacular materials are flint, clay pantile and colour render illustrating traditional Suffolk pigments such as Oxblood.
- H5.10 Settlement is of a low key character, with well integrated, wooded edges evident at South Elmham St Margaret. Wooded churchyards are also a distinctive characteristic of the few areas of settlement.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- H5.11 This is a landscape of contained character to the west, with enclosure created by landform and the field boundary hedgerow network. A more exposed aspect persists to the east, the legacy of agricultural intensification and field boundary loss. A simple landscape, although variety and texture is created by the tributaries and associated wetland vegetation, in addition to occasional woodland blocks and the field boundary hedgerow network.
- H5.12 Views are often contained by landform and field boundary vegetation, although there is intervisibility with elements of the adjacent *Saints Plateau – West* character area to the north, principally the woodland blocks which define the skyline. Church towers such as St Cross and St Margaret form occasional ‘surprise’ skyline elements within views.
- H5.13 The interplay of deciduous trees, mixed hedgerows, pasture and wet meadow creates a landscape of considerable seasonal colour variation. The landscape has a unified, rural character and there are few elements which interrupt this quality. This is a tranquil landscape in light of the sparse influence of settlement and the narrow rural lane network.

## **EVALUATION**

- H5.14 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Elmham Hall and its parkland setting, which indicates the historic influence of estates and associated management;
- Rectilinear co axial field boundary structure provided by hedgerows and hedgerow oaks, which illustrate the historic Enclosure landscape pattern;
- The network of minor tributaries which thread the landscape, creating localised variety and interest;

- Woodland blocks which create structural landscape diversity;
- The tranquil, rural character.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

H5.15 Key visual sensitivities are judged to be the wooded skylines within the adjacent plateau character area to the north, in addition to the containment provided by field boundary vegetation and by woodland blocks. Views to church towers, which form skyline elements at points, are another key visual sensitivity.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

H5.16 A managed, mixed agricultural landscape, which has retained a significant level of landscape structure and integrity in the western part of the area. This contrasts with the more eroded character of the landscape in the east. The tributaries and associated wetland vegetation margins create ecological interest.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Laying out of the estate and minor parkland at South Elmham Hall in the medieval and later periods;
- Parliamentary Enclosure prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, which created an irregular co axial field boundary pattern and landscape structure;
- Agricultural intensification and increasing arable cultivation from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and attendant field boundary loss (notably in the eastern half of the area).

#### ***Potential Future Change***

H5.17 Potential future landscape change may arise through the implementation of agri environment schemes, including hedgerow reinstatement and enhancement, and hedgerow tree planting. Future changes in the rural economy may also have implications in terms of arable cropping regimes (e.g. renewables/biofuels). The low lying land within the character area may be vulnerable to flooding in light of fluctuating water levels.

### **Strategic Objectives**

H5.18 **Key strategic objectives for this character area are to conserve and enhance the intimate, contained rural character created by landform and the relatively intact Enclosure landscape structure. The wetland character and sense of place created by the tributaries which thread the area and connect to the River Waveney should be conserved and enhanced/reinforced. Conserve the sparsely settled character and the limited influence of settlement.**

### ***Landscape Management***

H5.19 Key landscape management considerations are to conserve and enhance the network of field boundary hedgerows and the relict hedgerows lining the rural road network, to enhance landscape integrity and connectivity. Opportunities for new hedgerow tree planting should be explored, to reinforce landscape structure and to sustain this element as existing mature field boundary trees reach senescence. The wetland margins to the tributaries should be conserved and enhanced.

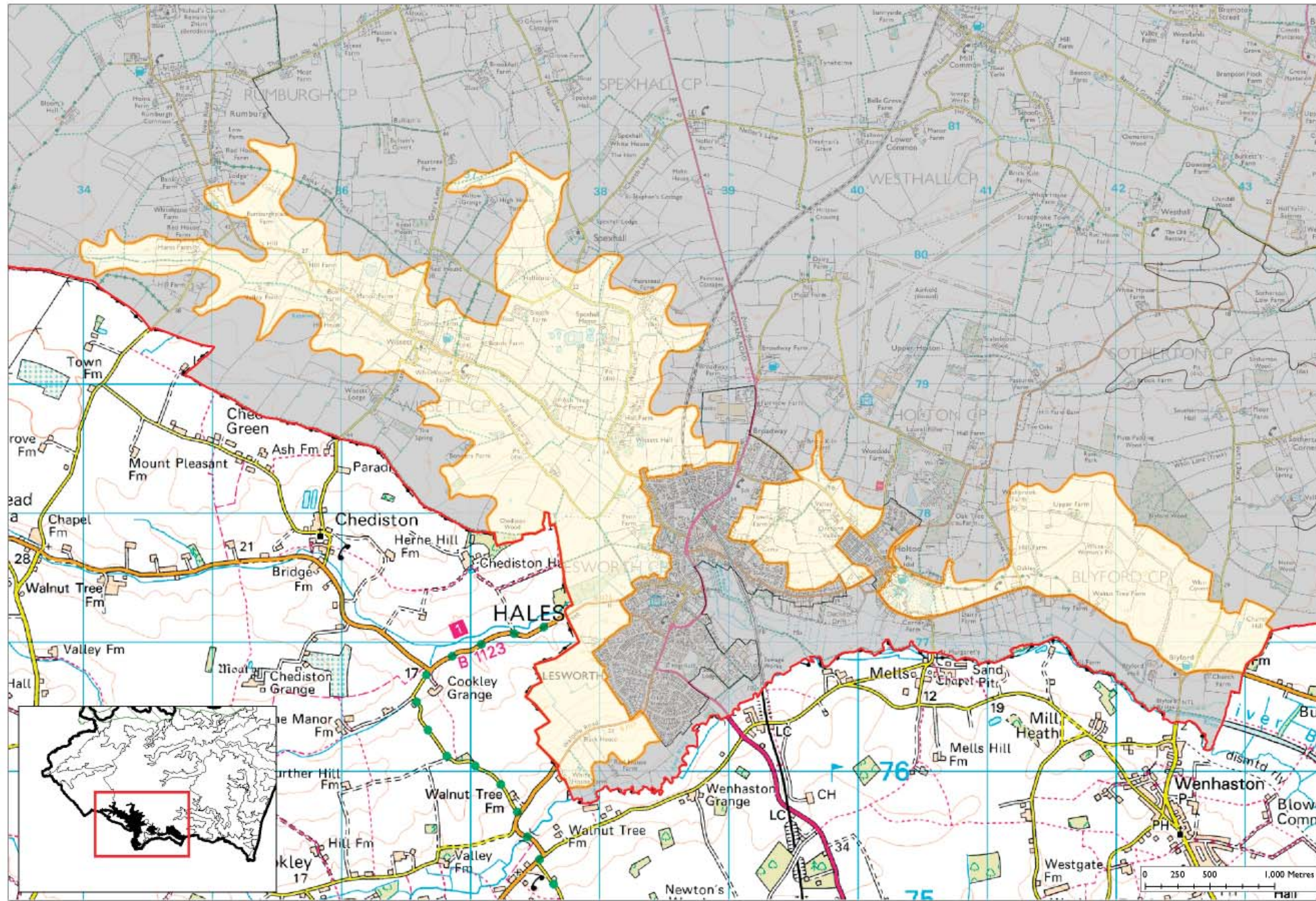
### ***Considerations in relation to development***

H5.20 Development considerations relate primarily to maintaining the low key influence of settlement and sparsely settled character, in addition to conserving the small scale, rural character of the road network within the area.













## H6: BLYTH TRIBUTARY VALLEY FARMLAND

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### Location and Boundaries

H6.1 *Blyth Tributary Valley Farmland* is located in the southern part of Waveney District and forms the sloping land to the north of the Blyth Valley. It is a transitional farmed landscape cut by tributaries, which drain south eastwards into the River Blyth and create an intimate wetland character. The extent of the character area is defined by the 10m AOD contour at the boundary with the *Blyth Valley* character area and by the 25-30m AOD contour to the boundary with the adjacent plateau character areas. The valley town of Halesworth, which has extended up the slopes from the valley floor effectively divides the character area east-west.

### Key Characteristics

- A bedrock geology of Crag sands and gravels is overlain by drift deposits of Lowestoft Till and river alluvium. Where tributaries cut through the landscape, sands and gravels and alluvium have been deposited;
- The tributaries create a subtly varied, undulating landform, with topography ranging from 10-30m AOD across the character area;
- Soils include slowly permeable calcareous soils on the drift deposits adjacent to the adjoining plateau character areas, with well drained sandy and coarse loamy soils in lower lying areas;
- This is a landscape which is predominantly under arable cultivation, with pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century co axial fields set within a network of mixed hedgerows with hedgerow trees;
- In some places the eroded field boundary vegetation creates a more open landscape. Further contrast is provided by areas under pasture, and blocks of broadleaf and mixed woodland including Christmas tree plantation;
- Landform and field boundary vegetation combine to limit intervisibility with adjacent character areas and framed views, except in areas where hedgerow boundaries have been eroded;
- Tributary drains and associated white painted bridges are a distinctive landscape feature where they are crossed by roads, as are field ponds. Lakes and lagoons occupy former mineral extraction sites (e.g. at Holton Pit);
- Principal historic elements of the landscape include the areas where a co axial field pattern persists, the post windmill at Holton and the associated village which lies at the confluence of a number of minor tributaries;
- A number of minor parkland features are apparent within the character area, notably the 'Gothick' lodge house associated with Spexhall Manor at Wisset;

- Settlement is represented by the linear hamlet of Wisset and the nucleated valley town of Halesworth which has extended into this area, in addition to Holton village. A range of traditional vernacular materials are evident, including thatch, colour limewash/plaster, timber framing and red brick;
- A varied mosaic landscape is created by the interplay of various landcover elements (woodland, pasture, arable, biofuel cropping and field boundary hedgerows);
- Tributary drains and associated wetlands create a landscape of intimate character at points;
- Outside of Halesworth the character area has a tranquil rural quality, with the influence of settlement subtly perceived.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- H6.2 Drift deposits of Lowestoft Tills and River Alluvium overlay a bedrock geology of Crag sands and gravels, whilst bands of sand, gravels, silt and clay are apparent along the alignment of the tributary drains which cut through the drift deposits. Landform is subtly varied and gently undulating in light of the influence of the tributaries, ranging from 10m AOD to the boundary with the adjacent *Blyth and Wang Valley* to 30m AOD to the boundary with the adjacent plateau character areas.
- H6.3 The lower lying areas associated with the tributary watercourses are characterised by well drained, sandy and coarse loamy soils, with slowly permeable calcareous soils evident in the more elevated parts of the area.
- H6.4 Land use is predominantly that of arable cultivation, with a co axial field pattern, often of pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century origin, set within a network of hedged field boundaries with hedgerow trees. Localised variation in landscape pattern is created where a more eroded field boundary pattern persists, and also by areas of pasture. Blocks of broadleaf and mixed woodland are also apparent, including areas of Christmas Tree plantation to the west of Halesworth. New hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting is evident at points within the field boundary network.
- H6.5 The network of minor tributary watercourses forms a linear network and associated wetland vegetation creates further variation in the landscape fabric.
- H6.6 The entire area is identified by the Ecological Network Map as falling within a grassland Core Area. Heathland creation opportunities are identified between Holton and Blyford by the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project.

### Historic Character

- H6.7 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have had landscape expression. These include pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure (of co axial field pattern) on the higher land to the east and west of Halesworth, in addition to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification and attendant

field boundary loss adjacent to the southern boundary of the area and to the west of Wisset. Industrial activity is also apparent in the mineral workings to the eastern edge of the village of Holton.

- H6.8 Principal elements of the cultural landscape include a moated site (SMR) at Bleach Farm to the north west of Halesworth, in addition to minor parklands such as at Wisset Hall.
- H6.9 Hodskinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk identifies a number of windmills/wind pumps to the western edge of Halesworth, although these have been lost in later settlement expansion (a post windmill is however extant at Holton). Also apparent on the 1783 Map is the Hall at Cheddiston and a 'pest house' (to house those with infectious diseases) to the north of Halesworth. The former parkland at Henham (a small part of the relict designed landscape of which lies within the area) is also identified by Hodskinson's Map.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- H6.10 This is a landscape of settled character, with the nucleated valley town of Halesworth which has extended upslope effectively dividing the area in two. A variety of settlement patterns are represented, including the small scale, linear hamlet at Wisset which is centred on the church, and the compact, nucleated village of Holton, centred on a small village green at the confluence of a number of minor tributaries. Settlement edges are often integrated with the wider landscape by woodland. Settlements are linked by a narrow rural road and lane network, which is often of semi sunken character, although the A146 bisects the area north south through Halesworth, as does the Ipswich-Lowestoft railway line.
- H6.11 Vernacular materials and building traditions are represented by the use of timber framing, flint and red brick at Wisset in addition to colour washed render and lime plaster at Holton. Holton has a largely intact settlement core, with thatch and traditional pigments such as ochre often evident to colour rendered walls.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- H6.12 A landscape of often small to medium scale in light of topography and the containment afforded by field boundary hedgerows and woodland blocks, although a more exposed, open quality persists at points in areas of field boundary loss (e.g. at Nun's Hill, to the west of Wisset).
- H6.13 A strongly textured quality and considerable landscape variety results from the juxtaposition of such landscape elements as pasture, arable fields (including *Miscanthus* biofuel crops), tributary watercourses and field boundary hedgerows. Mixed woodland blocks and areas of coniferous and Christmas tree plantations add to this sense of variety and visual diversity. The interplay of these varied landscape elements also creates a colourful landscape, markedly affected by the seasons and by variations in cropping.
- H6.14 Visual character is often contained due to landform variation and field boundary pattern. As such views are often framed, with the wooded skylines and parkland exotics at Spexhall Hall forming distinctive skyline features.



## **EVALUATION**

H6.15 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- The sunken lane network, which provides a low key, historic series of linkages between the settlements;
- The network of minor tributary watercourses which cut the landscape creating localised variation and landscape texture;
- Evidence of new tree planting, illustrating a sustainable, conservation orientated approach to landscape management;
- Area of remnant parklands and their settings, which illustrate something of the cultural landscape pattern;
- The low key, small scale historic settlement pattern which persists outside of Halesworth;
- The rural character of the landscape and separation between settlements such as Halesworth and Holton;
- Intact vernacular character of villages vulnerable to modern road signage and 'clutter' associated with traffic engineering.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

H6.16 Key visual sensitivities are judged to be the wooded horizons such as those created by the parkland exotics at Spexhall, in addition to the containment afforded by landform and field boundary vegetation. The intervisibility with tall structures such as the pylons in the adjacent plateau character area is another key visual sensitivity.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

H6.17 A managed, productive agricultural landscape, with evidence of recent landscape management initiatives including new hedgerow and tree planting. In terms of visual perspectives this is a landscape of diverse condition and quality. The status of the entire area as part of the grassland Core Area within the Ecological Network Mapping Project indicates ecological value.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Parliamentary Enclosure;
- Settlement expansion at Halesworth beyond the river and onto the surrounding valley slopes;

- Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification and attendant field boundary loss;
- Hedgerow reinstatement and restoration in the implementation of agri environment schemes; and
- Traffic management schemes and associated road signage.

### ***Potential Future Change***

H6.18 Potential future change may arise through the continued demand for biofuel cropping in light of renewable energy pressures (biofuel cropping has already occurred in parts of the area). Further potential for change may occur through flooding of tributary water courses and lower lying land associated with the River Blyth, in light of climate change. Continuing development pressures and settlement expansion are likely to be an issue.

### ***Strategic Objectives***

H6.19 **The primary strategic objective for this character area is to conserve and enhance the landscape network of tributary valleys that thread through the farmland, to conserve and reinforce the wetland character associated with these minor watercourses and to create stronger connections with the adjacent landscape of the Blyth Valley. The very contained visual character of the area and low key influence of settlement should be conserved.**

### ***Landscape Management***

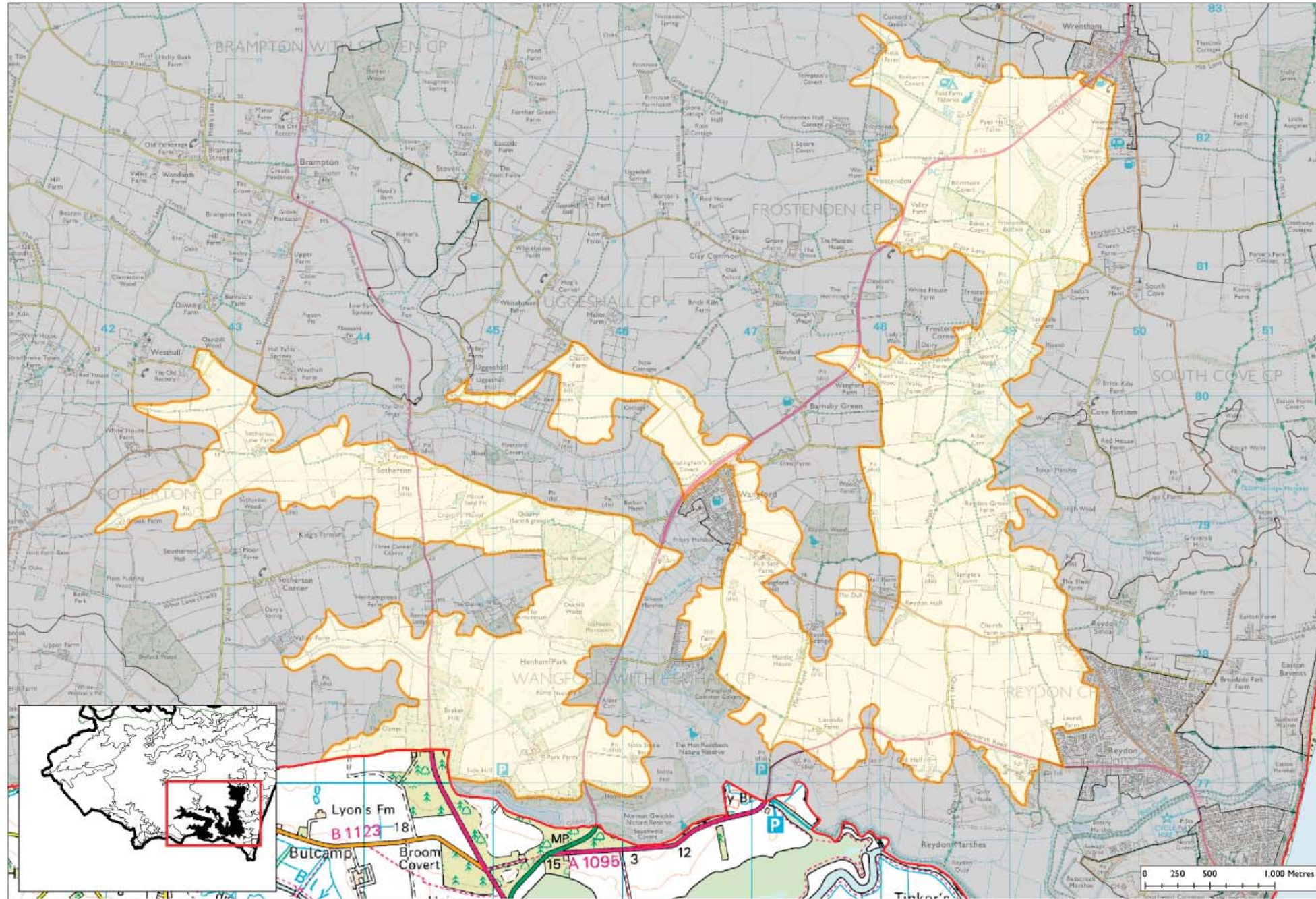
H6.20 Key landscape management considerations relate to the replanting and reinforcement of existing field boundary hedgerows and the hedgerow tree network to enhance connectivity and visual integrity. This is a landscape of mosaic character although the siting of further areas of woodland and biofuel cropping should be carefully considered in order to avoid fragmentation of the intrinsic landscape character. Opportunities for heathland creation and linkages should be explored on acid, sandy soils.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

H6.21 Conserve the low key, historic pattern of settlement linked by narrow rural lanes which persists outside of Halesworth. Conserve the sense of separation between settlements, notably the rural landscape between Halesworth and Holton. Conserve and enhance wooded settlement edges, using native planting to integrate settlements with their landscape, notably the extended edge of Halesworth. Avoid the introduction of further elements such as road signage and traffic calming measures, within this very rural landscape, which could begin to urbanise settlement character.







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## H7: BLYTH AND WANG TRIBUTARY VALLEY FARMLAND

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### Location and Boundaries

H7.1 This is an area of gently sloping farmland extending up from the Wang and Blyth Valley to meet the slightly elevated plateau. It is a subtle intermediate landscape forming a transition between the enclosed valleys and the more exposed plateau. Broadly defined by topography; the 5m contour marks the edge of the valley, with the 15-20m contour roughly being the edge of the plateau. To the east is the distinct Sandling landscape of the coast marked by an absence of drift covering the Crag sand and consequently more sandy soils and heathy vegetation with pines. The area is entirely within Waveney District and is partly within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

### Key Characteristics

- A bedrock geology of Norwich Crag is overlain with deep glaciofluvial drift deposits of sand and gravels and cut by minor tributaries, giving rise to an undulating landform.
- Topography ranges from 5m AOD to the boundary with the adjacent Wang and Blyth Valleys, to 15m -20m AOD to the adjacent plateau.
- The area forms a backdrop to the adjacent river landscapes providing scale and contrast.
- Well drained, sandy soils associated with glaciofluvial drift material create a fertile landscape predominantly in arable cultivation.
- Some areas of rough grazing and permanent pasture are associated with the minor tributaries that cross the landscape.
- Enclosure pattern is primarily pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure – some intact hedgerow networks remain, while in other areas hedgerows are sparse. Large mature oaks within hedgerows are key features.
- Considerable wooded cover notably associated with the tributary valleys as well as well as areas of parkland, as at Henham Park, with its plantations, copses and avenues.
- Principal elements of the cultural landscape are the hall and associated parkland at Henham, with estate buildings such as lodges.
- Settlement includes the extended villages at Reydon and Wangford on the border of the area, with modern development fronting or backing onto farmland. Outside the villages there are numerous dispersed farms, manors and halls.



- A quiet, rural landscape forming a transition area between the river valleys and higher plateau areas. Tranquillity is reduced by a number of A roads that cross the landscape.
- A network of narrow rural lanes, some sunken and enclosed by steep vegetated banks, create a more enclosed character.
- Occasional views across adjacent low lying Blyth Valley marshes to the south.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- H7.2 The bedrock geology of Crag - sand is overlain with deep drift deposits with diamicton till on the higher areas, with sands and gravels on the lower slopes bordering the valleys. The minor tributaries that thread down through the landscape are underlain by narrow bands of till. An exception is the area around Frostenden Corner, which the Crag - sand is exposed – this area relates more to the river valley. Topography ranges from 5m AOD to the boundary with the adjacent Wang and Blyth Valleys, to 15m -20m AOD on the edge of the adjacent plateau. This is a gently undulating agricultural landscape.
- H7.3 Well drained, sandy soils associated with drift material create a fertile landscape predominantly in arable cultivation, with fields set within a network of intact hedged field boundaries with hedgerow trees. Some areas of rough grazing and permanent pasture are associated with the minor tributaries that cross the landscape and provide a strong visual contrast with the arable landscape. Close to Frostenden, the low lying marsh and pasture forms part of the Pakefield to Easton Bavents SSSI/SPA. Woodland is primarily associated with the parkland estate landscape at Henham, where deciduous woodlands and small plantations create a more enclosed character. Tuttle's Wood is an ancient woodland.
- H7.4 There is currently no ECONET data for the majority of this area, although the tributaries are identified as a wetland habitat zone region.

### **Historic Character**

- H7.5 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) indicates a landscape of predominantly pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure with a random pattern. In some areas such as around Reydon Grove Farm the larger field pattern is indicative of 18<sup>th</sup> century and later enclosure of former common arable or heathland. The field pattern is relatively intact, with areas where boundaries have been lost mainly associated with the adjacent plateau landscape.
- H7.6 A key feature of the historic landscape is Henham Park, a Grade II Registered Park and Garden set on the slopes above the Blyth and Wang Valley. The park has an influence on the wider landscape through the amount of associated tree and woodland cover in the form of boundary plantations, estate woodland and parkland features which creates a more enclosed contained character in the area to the west

of the River Wang. Picturesque Lodges and entrance gates are further visible features of interest on the edge of the valley.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- H7.7 The extended villages at Reydon and Wangford are both located on the boundaries of the area, with modern development fronting or backing onto farmland. There are dispersed farms, manors and halls across the rural area linked by narrow rural lanes.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- H7.8 A landscape of often small to medium scale as a result of the gently undulating topography, interaction with the adjacent river valleys and the containment afforded by intact field boundary hedgerows.
- H7.9 The landscape is viewed from small rural lanes which cross the plateau, tributary farmland and dip down into the adjacent valleys and as such it is difficult to perceive the landscape as a single area.
- H7.10 Although, the larger settlements of Reydon and Wangford are on the borders there are no villages within the area. Apart from a very short section of the A12, the area contains only quiet rural lanes and it remains a very tranquil landscape.

## **EVALUATION**

- H7.11 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- The network of low key rural lanes;
- The minor tributary watercourses which cut the landscape creating localised variation and landscape texture;
- The historic parkland and its wooded setting at Henham which is important as the backdrop to the Wang/Blyth Valleys;
- The lack of development and quiet, tranquil rural character;
- The intact field pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- H7.12 This is an essentially enclosed, contained landscape, with relatively few long views. The key visual sensitivity relates to the crests of the adjacent valleys where this landscape forms the 'skyline'. At Henham the wooded horizons are significant in the views from the Wang Valley.

## **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

H7.13 This is a managed agricultural landscape, generally in good condition with an intact pattern of hedges and hedgerow trees providing landscape structure. The landscape forms a clear transition between the wetland mosaics of the river valleys and the more, elevated and open plateau landscapes. Ecological value is likely to be associated with the minor tributary watercourses.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Enclosure and loss of common/heathland;
- Settlement expansion at Wangford and Reydon with some more exposed modern settlement edges;
- Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification and attendant field boundary loss.

### ***Potential Future Change***

H7.14 Potential future change may arise through agricultural change, notable crop change in this predominantly arable landscape, for example for biofuel or other alternative crops. Further potential for change may occur through flooding of tributary water courses and lower lying land associated with the River Blyth, in light of climate change.

## **Strategic Objectives**

H7.15 **The primary strategic objective for this character area is to conserve and enhance the subtle tributary valleys that thread through the farmland and link to the river valleys and coastal marshes. In the light of climate change and rising sea levels these minor tributaries are key areas for creation of freshwater habitats to compensate to some extent for those likely to be lost to inundation at the coast. The landscape pattern of pre-18th century enclosure hedgerows and pattern of trees, woodland and parkland which create interest and diversity in the landscape should also be conserved.**

## ***Landscape Management***

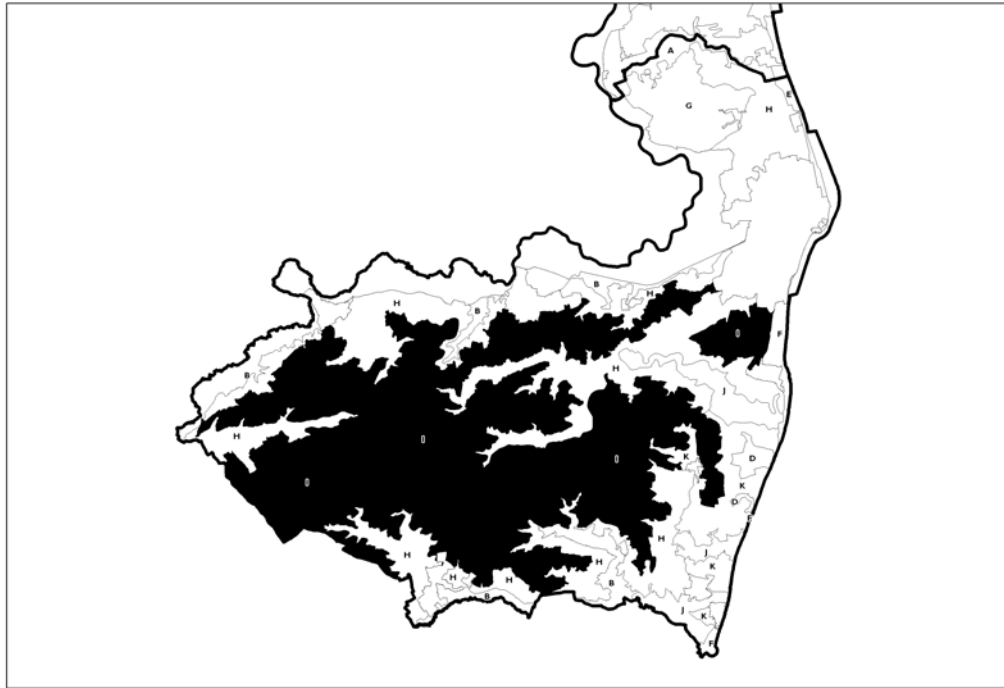
H7.16 Key landscape management considerations relate to the replanting and reinforcement of existing field boundary hedgerows and the hedgerow tree network to enhance connectivity and visual integrity. There are also opportunities to re create and enhance the wetland landscape along minor tributaries associated with the Wang and Blyth.

## ***Considerations in relation to Development***

H7.17 Conserve the low key, historic pattern of settlement Opportunities to enhance the relatively long edges of Reydon and Wangford where they adjoin this area should be considered.

## I: FARMED PLATEAU CLAYLAND

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- I This landscape type occupies much of the elevated land within Waveney District, with the boundaries defined by topography and by the extent of Lowestoft Till drift deposits. An Enclosure landscape structure, often of early and relatively intact co axial formation, is a distinctive feature of the landscape type, as is the extent of arable cultivation.

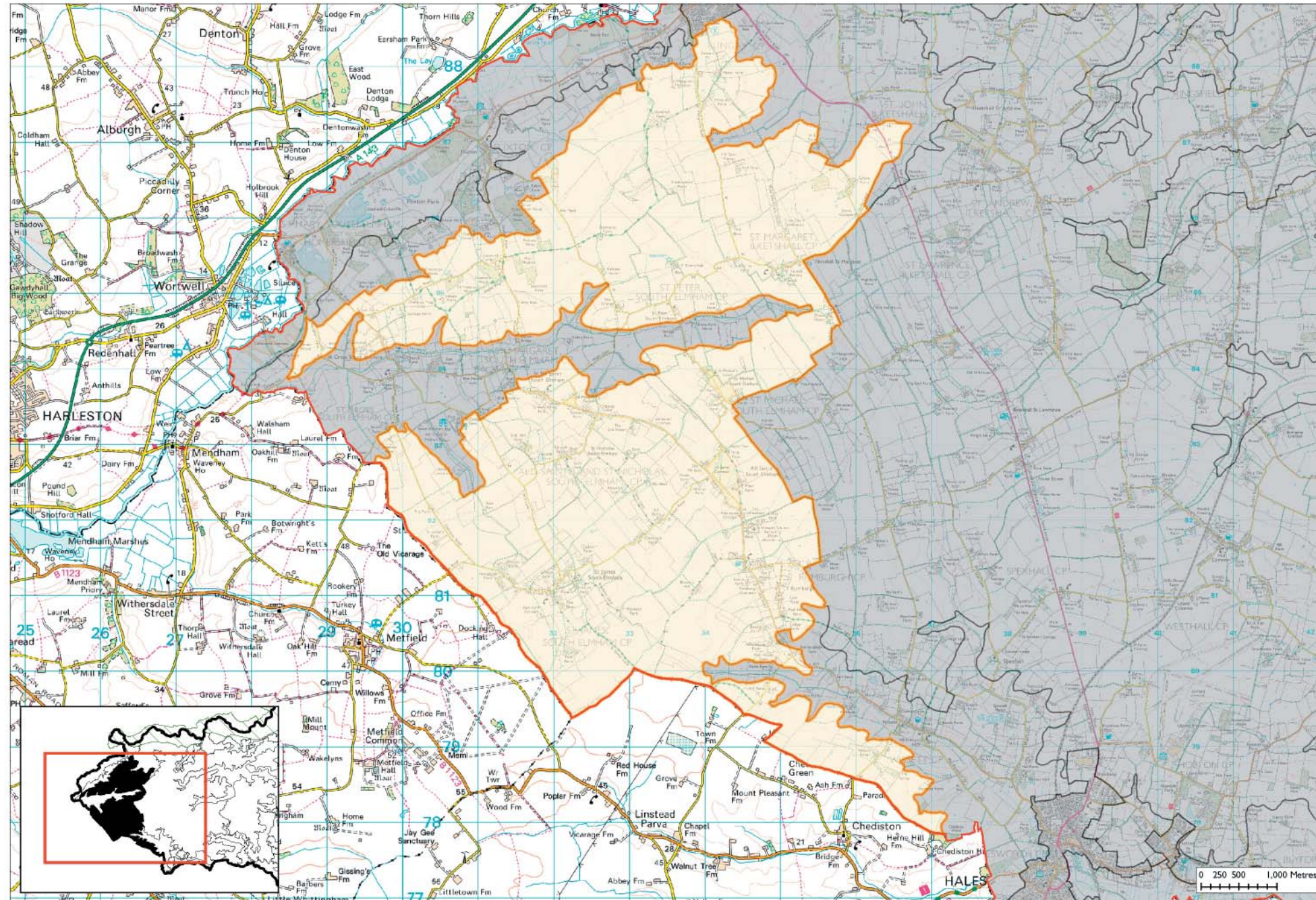
### Key Characteristics

- A Crag bedrock geology is overlain with thick drift deposits of Lowestoft Till;
- An elevated, gently undulating plateau landform, with topography ranging from 10-50m AOD;
- Landcover is predominantly that of arable agriculture, often set within an early Enclosure co axial field boundary pattern of small to medium scale;
- Agricultural intensification is apparent in places, with an eroded field boundary pattern and exposed aspect evident;
- Historic, wooded parklands (which sometimes incorporate high distributions of ancient woodland), and associated estate features such as lodge houses and farms are a distinctive feature, particularly in the east;
- Military airfields, exploiting the elevated topography and windswept aspect, are an occasional feature of the plateaux;

- Settlement is often dispersed and associated with the narrow rural road networks;
- Views are often framed due to field boundary hedgerows although there is potential for long views and for intervisibility with other landscape types where a larger scale/eroded field boundary pattern persists;
- Due to the elevated and partly exposed aspect, skyline elements such as church towers and pylons are locally prominent.

<b>Landscape Type I: Farmed Plateau Clayland</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>I1</b>	<b>Saints Plateau - West</b>
<b>I2</b>	<b>Saints Plateau - East</b>
<b>I3</b>	<b>Sotterley and Benacre Plateau</b>
<b>I4</b>	<b>Gisleham Plateau</b>





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## II: SAINTS PLATEAU - WEST

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### Location and Boundaries

- 11.1 *Saints Plateau – West* is located in the westernmost part of Waveney District and is cut by a minor westerly draining tributary valley of the Waveney. The landscape type extends into the adjacent South Norfolk District to the west. The extents of the character area are defined by the District boundary to the west and by the smaller scale, more intact co axial field pattern of the adjacent *Saints Plateau - East* character area to the east. The character area is defined by predominantly flat arable farmland lying at over 30m AOD.

### Key Characteristics

- A bedrock geology of Norwich Crag is overlain with thick Diamicton deposits, giving rise to a gently undulating plateau landform;
- Topography is very gently undulating, ranging from 30m AOD to the adjacent tributary valley crests to just over 50m AOD at South Elmham St James;
- Slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged soils are associated with chalky till drift deposits;
- Predominant landcover is that of arable agriculture, juxtaposed with occasional areas of improved pasture and rough grazing. A geometric and partly co axial field pattern is evident, although scale is highly variable due to areas of field boundary loss;
- Field boundaries are defined by native hedgerows of variable density and quality. Stag headed oaks are often evident as hedgerow trees;
- Small scale blocks of broadleaf woodland, often ancient semi natural woodlands, punctuate the field pattern at points, providing localised interest in a landscape of otherwise simple landcover elements;
- Ancient woodlands are often designated as County Wildlife Sites (SSSI at Abbey Wood/Packway Wood). Meadows at Laurel Farm (CWS) are important grassland habitats in this predominantly arable landscape;
- Principal historic features are the numerous moated sites across the plateau. Flint churches are distinctive e.g. South Elmham St James;
- Settlement is dispersed, with compact, often linear hamlets focussed on historic village commons;
- A remote and rural, sparsely settled plateau landscape, with a more intimate spatial scale and pattern around settlement edges, which contrasts with the more eroded large scale arable field network elsewhere within the area;
- The character area is crossed by an extensive network of Rights of Way.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- 11.2 Dense layers of Diamicton and chalky till drift deposits overlay the Norwich Crag bedrock geology, giving rise to an elevated plateau landform with subtle undulation and topographic variation. Topography ranges from 30m AOD to the crests of the adjacent tributary valleys to just over 50m AOD around South Elmham St James.
- 11.3 The landcover pattern is principally that of arable cultivation, set within a co axial Enclosure landscape of rectilinear fields of small to medium size, although a large scale field pattern is often apparent where landscape structure has become eroded. Field boundaries are defined by mixed native hedgerows of highly variable density and quality, with hedgerow oaks including stag heads often apparent. Areas of rough grazing and improved pasture provide localised variety in a predominantly arable landscape.
- 11.4 Small scale blocks of broadleaf woodland, often ancient semi natural woodlands, punctuate the field pattern at points, providing localised interest in a landscape of otherwise simple landcover elements. These woodland fragments represent remnants of a much greater historic distribution of woodland including former wood-pasture. The ancient semi natural woodland (predominantly oak-hazel-ash, with stands of ash-maple and oak-hornbeam) at Abbey Wood and Packway Wood (partly within the *Mid Waveney Tributary Farmland* character area), Flixton, which was once associated with the adjacent nunnery, is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and contains a varied ancient woodland ground flora. Other ancient woodlands e.g. Coombes Wood are recognised as being of local ecological value through identification as County Wildlife Sites. The grassland at Laurel Farm Meadows is designated as SSSI, whilst other areas of grasslands are identified as County Wildlife Sites (e.g. All Saints Rectory Meadows).
- 11.5 Much of the northern and western parts of the character area are identified by the Ecological Network Mapping Project as falling within a General Enhancement Area for grassland, woodland and heathland habitat creation. No opportunities for heathland creation are identified by the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project.
- 11.6 Commons are another distinctive feature of the landscape as at All Saints, as are moated sites (e.g. at the remains of the priory adjacent to St Michael's Church) and farm ponds.

### Historic Character

- 11.7 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes with landscape expression. These include pre 18th Century Enclosure where a long co axial field pattern still persists, most notably in the north western and southern/south western parts of the character area and adjacent to area of settlement. Within the central core of the character area, however, many of the historic co axial field boundaries have been lost to 1950s agricultural intensification.

- 11.8 Principal elements of the cultural landscape include moated sites and former dwellings across the character area, notably adjacent to the former St Nicholas Church and near to St James Church.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- 11.9 This is a settled rural landscape with dispersed settlements of compact character and of linear formation. Church towers, historic commons and informal village greens/tyes often form the focus for settlement, such as at the hamlets of South Elmham St Margaret, and the very large village green at All Saints, to the eastern edge of the character area.
- 11.10 Settlements display a generally intact vernacular character, with traditional buildings exhibiting materials such as timber framing and lime plaster, oxblood colour render, clay pantile and thatch. Wooded settlement edges and tree lined verges fringing the narrow rural lanes which link settlements are also common features, creating a sense of enclosure and containment. Traditional farm buildings such as barns are apparent, although now increasingly converted to residential properties. Farm diversification schemes including holiday chalets are also evident.
- 11.11 Outside of the areas of settlement the only evidence of habitation is a scattering of isolated farmsteads. On the boundary of the area, in the north the valley town of Bungay has extended up from the Waveney Valley to the plateau edge.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- 11.12 This is a typical rural Suffolk Enclosure landscape which has retained something of its historic landscape pattern in spite of modern farming practices. It is a landscape of variable visual character and quality, with an intimate small scale landscape apparent to the settlement edges, where a more intact co axial field pattern persists. In these areas mixed hedgerows and hedgerow/field trees provide containment and filter views. The juxtaposition of small areas of rough grazing, grassland field margins and improved pasture with the predominantly arable field pattern creates localised variety and textural interest, as do the scattered blocks of broadleaf farm woodland. The broadleaf woodlands including ancient woodlands e.g. Abbey Wood/Packway Wood are often distinctive in marking the visual relationship with the edge of the adjacent tributary farmland and valley landscapes. The co axial, hedged field pattern and the network of narrow rural lanes create a landscape of often confusing, disorientating quality.
- 11.13 A more exposed and open character is evident in areas where field boundaries have been lost to agricultural intensification, with long panoramic views often possible across the elevated plateau from these points, and to the Waveney Valley. Woodland within the crest of the adjacent tributary farmland character area to the north creates a backdrop to these views.
- 11.14 This is a landscape of simple, uncluttered and often undisturbed skylines. As such the church towers within settlements, such as at St Margarets, are prominent horizon elements.

- 11.15 The small scale settlement pattern contributes to the perception of a rural landscape which is tranquil in character.

## **EVALUATION**

- 11.16 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Surviving parts of the co axial field pattern, which indicates early (pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century) Enclosure;
- Remaining hedgerow field boundaries and stag headed hedgerow oak trees, which indicate the historic Enclosure landscape pattern and provide opportunities for connectivity;
- The flint churches which are a distinctive historic marker and reference point within the landscape;
- Elements of the cultural landscape, such as moated sites;
- Historic commons and village greens/tyes which provide foci for the areas of settlement;
- Small scale blocks of semi natural ancient woodland which have biodiversity value;
- Traditional, compact settlements and farm buildings which display evidence of vernacular building materials;
- Tranquil, rural and remote character.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- 11.17 Key visual sensitivities are judged to be the simple and largely uninterrupted skylines, the wooded backdrop created by the tributary valley to the north which curtails long distance views, and views to church towers which form the few prominent skyline elements.
- 11.18 The potential for long views across parts of this elevated plateau landscape to the Waveney Valley are another key visual sensitivity, as are the wooded settlement edges which contain the influence of settlement.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- 11.19 This is a landscape of variable condition and quality, with areas of more intact landscape structure and small scale landscape pattern contrasting markedly with the more eroded landscape pattern which is prominent across much of the character area. As such landscape and ecological integrity is likely to be strongest where a more intact field boundary pattern and landscape fabric persists and is weaker

elsewhere, although arable farmland may offer potential habitat for ground nesting birds and bird species associated with arable agriculture.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Early agricultural Enclosure and clearance of areas of woodland and wood-pasture for agriculture;
- 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification, arable cultivation and attendant areas of field boundary loss;
- Development pressure in relation to the valley town of Bungay within this more open plateau landscape;
- Conversion of traditional working farm buildings, such as barns, to residential dwellings, and farm diversification schemes including chalets.

### ***Potential Future Change***

- 11.20 Potential future landscape change may emerge through implementation of agri environment schemes, and/or new farms or through arable cropping such as biofuels. Stag headed oaks which form a significant part of the landscape structure within this character area are vulnerable to fluctuating water levels and drought in light of climate change. Changes in cropping to meet the demand for biofuels and renewable energy may be an issue.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- 11.21 **The primary strategic objective for this character area is to conserve and enhance the small scale historic landscape pattern which persists at points and to conserve the low key, well wooded settlements, maintaining the tranquil, rural and remote character of the area.**

### ***Landscape Management***

- 11.22 Principal landscape management objectives are to reinforce existing native hedgerows with appropriate species in order to enhance landscape structure and opportunities for connectivity. New native hedgerow tree planting should also be considered as part of the long term approach to hedgerow management and enhancement. Conserve and enhance the remaining examples of co axial field boundaries.
- 11.23 Consideration should also be given to creation of further small scale farm woodland and areas of wood-pasture adjacent to existing woodland footprints to ensure continuity of cover and enhancement of habitat connectivity. Existing commons and village greens/tyes should be conserved and enhanced/restored where possible.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

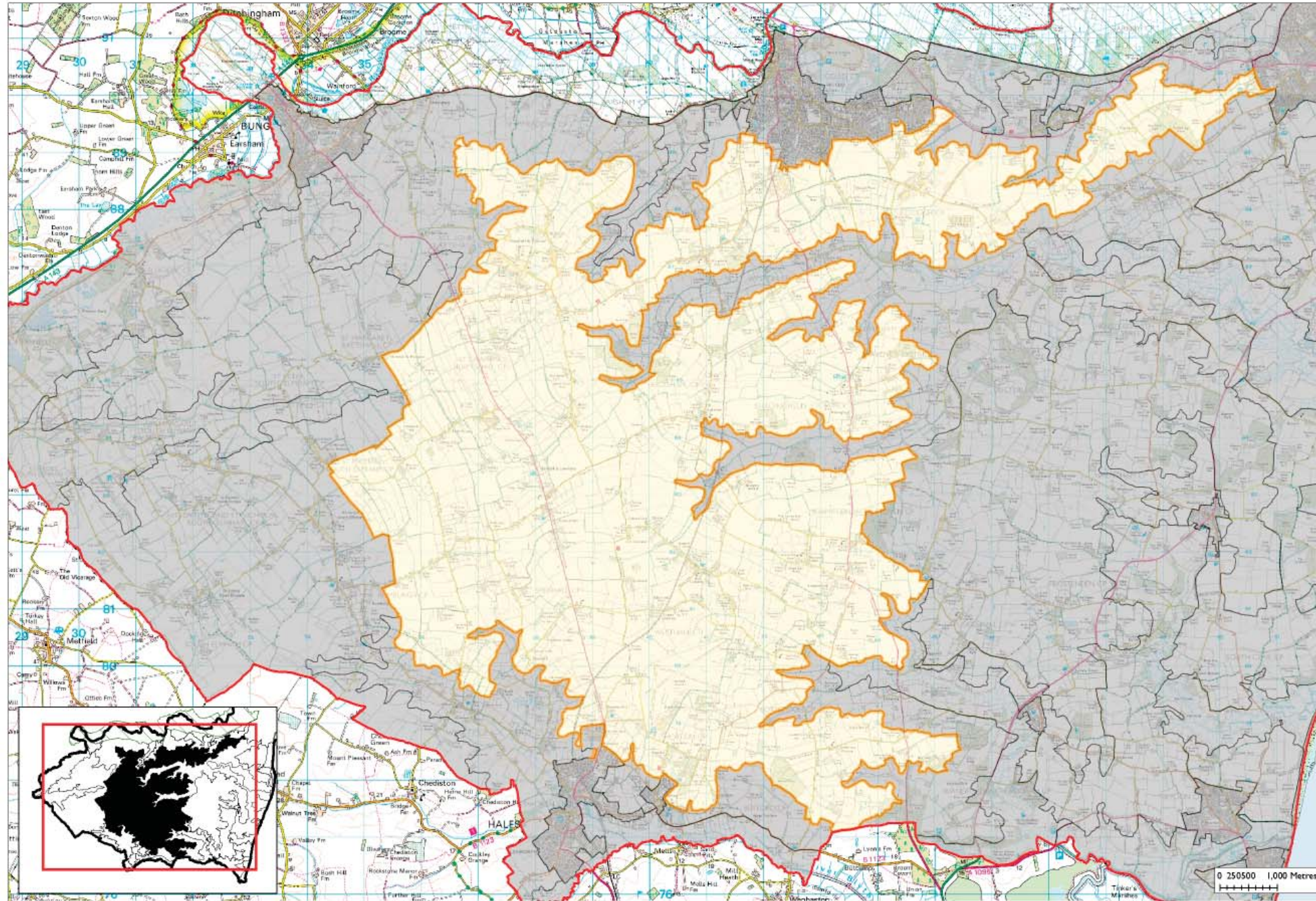
- 11.24 Conserve and enhance the existing wooded settings and low key approaches to the settlements, such as narrow rural lanes and grassy, tree lined verges. The commons



and village greens are important to the setting of settlements and should be conserved. Development should retain the rural quality of the landscape and make reference to indigenous vernacular materials. Large scale woodland planting would not be appropriate in this open plateau landscape, although small scale farm woodlands could be accommodated.

- 11.25 Further extension of the valley settlement (Bungay in the Waveney Valley) into this more open, plateau landscape should be closely monitored and avoid creation of an exposed town edge. Views into the Waveney Valley should be conserved.
- 11.26 Conserve views to prominent features such as church towers and wooded skylines.





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## I2: SAINTS PLATEAU - EAST

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### Location and Boundaries

- 12.1 The character area is located in the western part of Waveney District, and defined by a slightly elevated plateau landform at 33-45m AOD. The relatively intact pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century co axial Enclosure landscape pattern creates a comparatively small scale landscape pattern which distinguishes it from adjoining plateau areas.

### Key Characteristics

- A bedrock geology of Crag – Sand predominates, with isolated areas of Crag – Gravel. The bedrock is overlain with drift deposits of Lowestoft Till and landform is that of an elevated, gently undulating plateau;
- Localised bands of clay, sand, gravel and silt mark the heads of minor tributary valleys which fall away from the edges of the plateau;
- Topography ranges from 33m AOD at the heads of the adjacent tributary valleys, with the highest point found at over 45m AOD;
- Slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged and clayey soils overlay the till deposits, creating an agricultural landscape encompassing small areas of common land, pasture and rough grazing, but now largely under arable cultivation;
- A good field boundary pattern is defined by early (pre 18th Century) co axial Enclosure field boundaries, creating a landscape structure of rectilinear form and small to medium scale;
- Mixed native hedgerows of variable density are reinforced by mature hedgerow oaks. Blocks of deciduous farm woodland (often ancient woodland) provide variation in the landscape structure;
- The density of hedgerows and the areas of farm woodland create a landscape of relatively contained scale and views;
- Principal elements of the cultural landscape include the remains of a Benedictine Priory at All Saints, areas of unenclosed common land which form settlement foci, and a number of moated sites;
- The plateau has a settled character with dispersed or very compact linear hamlets focussed on common lands e.g. Ilketshall St Andrew. Settlements are linked by a network of narrow rural lanes;
- Local vernacular is defined by traditional red brick and pantile dwellings and flint churches. Oxblood colour washed render is also apparent;
- Church towers including round towers form foci for settlements e.g. at Ilketshall St Andrew and Ilketshall St Margaret, and are prominent skyline elements;

- A landscape with a distinct historic character and pattern, which creates a textured, mosaic character at points. The co axial field pattern creates a relatively intimate spatial scale in an arable landscape;
- Evidence of recreational access is provided by the common lands and a network of rights of way which traverses the area.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- 12.2 An elevated, gently undulating plateau landform results from a bedrock geology of Norwich Crag – Sand and Crag - Gravels. Bedrock geology is overlain in places with drift deposits of Lowestoft Tills, in addition to bands of clay, silt, sands and gravels which mark the heads of minor tributary valleys which fall away from the edges of the plateau. Topography ranges from approximately 33m AOD to the edge of the area, to 45m AOD at Ilketshall St Lawrence.
- 12.3 Till deposits are overlain with slowly permeable and often seasonally waterlogged clay soils, creating a mixed agricultural landscape defined by areas of pasture, common land and rough grazing, with arable cultivation predominating across much of the area. A largely intact co axial Enclosure field pattern of 18<sup>th</sup> Century origin is apparent across much of the area, creating a strongly rectilinear landscape structure of often small to medium scale. Field boundaries are defined by mixed native hedgerows of variable density and condition, often reinforced by mature hedgerow oak trees. Localised variation and punctuation within this landscape structure, in addition to ecological diversity, is created by blocks of deciduous farm woodland (often ancient woodland) e.g. Blyford Wood (also a County Wildlife Site). A number of woodlands on ancient woodland footprints also incorporate areas of coniferous plantation e.g. Great Wood, Briery Wood and Gorse Thick.
- 12.4 Much of the area is identified by the Ecological Network Mapping Project as falling within a grassland Core Area, with the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project noting the potential for heathlands in the easternmost extents of the area.

### **Historic Character**

- 12.5 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have influenced the present day character of the landscape. These include pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure and field patterns of long co axial formation across much of the central part of the area. Post 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure is also apparent in isolated parts of the area to the north, whilst large parcels of 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification and attendant field boundary loss are also apparent to the east and west.
- 12.6 Hodskinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk shows the effects of early Enclosure upon the character area, with a relatively small scale network of commons and greens surviving the Enclosures around Ilketshall St Andrew. Common lands to settlement edges remain a distinctive feature of the landscape to this day.

- 12.7 Also identified on the 1783 Map is the dispersed pattern of small scale settlements such as Ilketshall St Lawrence and Ilketshall St Andrew, which remains extant today. The windmill at Ilketshall St Andrew has however since been lost (although the name is perpetuated at Mill Common), although one remains to the north of Ilketshall St Lawrence.
- 12.8 Other aspects of the cultural landscape include the remains of the Benedictine Priory of All Saints, in addition to moated sites and farms, which are designated as Scheduled Monuments, notably at Moat Farm and Westend Farm, near Willingham, and at Mill Common.
- 12.9 Holton Hall, a former Regency house and parkland landscape at the southern end of the area, was destroyed in 1957, although parts of the designed landscape including lake and woodlands survive within a mobile home park on the site. The estate was home to Zemke's Wolfpack (the US Airforce 56<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group) in World War II and also to the 489<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and 5<sup>th</sup> Emergency Rescue Squadron. A disused airfield to the north of the park dates from this period.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- 12.10 This is a landscape of settled character, with a series of compact and dispersed villages and hamlets focussed on historic village greens, commons and tyes (e.g. Ilketshall St Andrew and Ilketshall St Lawrence), and linked by a network of narrow rural roads. The A144 crosses the area broadly north-south. Settlement pattern is both linear (Ilketshall St Lawrence) and dispersed (e.g. at St Lawrence Green), with low key, contained and occasionally wooded settlement edges apparent. Vernacular elements including red brick, clay pantile, flint churches and oxblood colour render area apparent to the cores of settlements which have not expanded significantly since they were established. To the south the valley town of Halesworth has extended up the slopes onto the plateau.
- 12.11 Isolated churches are a feature of the landscape as at Spexhall and may indicate historic settlement shrinkage.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- 12.12 In areas where a relatively intact co axial field boundary structure survives, this is a landscape of fairly intimate, contained spatial and visual character. Views are often framed due to the density of field boundary vegetation and the presence of mature hedgerow trees, although more distant views are available where an eroded field boundary pattern persists, albeit often set against a wooded backdrop. Blocks of ancient woodland are often clustered at the boundaries with the adjacent tributary farmlands.
- 12.13 A simple arable landscape, but with localised texture and variety created by historic commonlands and tyes, in addition to rough grazing and grassy verges adjacent to the rural road network, as well as dispersed blocks of mixed woodland. The presence of the co axial field boundary pattern creates a strong, legible rectilinear landscape structure across much of the area. This a landscape of simple, muted colour, although this varies according to the arable crops grown.



- 12.14 Whilst settled in character, settlement is of a small scale, low key character, linked by lightly used rural lanes. As such the landscape has an often remote, sparsely populated and tranquil quality, apart from the A144. The sense of tranquillity is however interrupted at point due to the presence of pylons and overhead wires, masts and poles to the western part of the character area, which creates a cluttered, untidy skyline at points.

## **EVALUATION**

- 12.15 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Areas where an intact co axial field boundary pattern persists, which creates a strong landscape framework and sense of place as a recognisably 'Suffolk' agricultural landscape;
- Blocks of ancient woodland, which are important locally for biodiversity, in addition to providing markers or reference points within the landscape;
- Remnants of the historic landscape including the relict parklands and woodlands of the former Holton Hall;
- Mature hedgerow oak trees which are important in defining the sense of place and potentially also for wildlife;
- Commons, greens and tyes which form foci for the compact, low key settlements and illustrate historic settlement morphology;
- Small, scale and historic settlement character, the influence of which upon the wider landscape is often contained by wooded settlement edges.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- 12.16 In areas where field boundaries have been removed there is a more open and exposed character, allowing longer views. Church towers, including isolated churches which form a reference point within the landscape are a key sensitivity. The cluttered skylines in the western part of the area (due to the influence of pylons and wires) are sensitive to further vertical development.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- 12.17 This is a landscape of variable condition and quality, with an intact and small scale, historic landscape structure often apparent to the settlement edges and to the commons/tyes. Whilst parts of the character area display an eroded landscape fabric which is the legacy of agricultural intensification and modern arable cultivation, the co axial field boundary pattern still provides a strong, legible landscape fabric, connectivity and sense of historical landscape continuity.

## **Landscape Change**

### ***Past Change***

- Emparking of land at Holton Hall and laying out of the designed landscape and planned estate;
- 18<sup>th</sup> Century and later Parliamentary Enclosure, although substantial tracts of historic common land survived this process;
- Exploitation of the elevated plateau aspect by windmills and later by airfields;
- Demolition of Hobland Hall and subsequent fragmentation/erosion of the estate landscape;
- Agricultural intensification, arable cultivation and attendant boundary loss in the mid – late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, notably to the eastern and westernmost extents of the area;
- Development pressures, notably expansion of the valley town of Halesworth onto the plateau.

### ***Potential Future Change***

- 12.18 Potential future landscape change may emerge through implementation of agri environment schemes. Mature hedgerow oaks which form a significant part of the landscape structure within this character area are vulnerable to fluctuating water levels and drought in light of climate change. Changes in cropping to meet the demand for biofuels and renewable energy may be an issue. Further development pressures may also be an issue in this open plateau landscape, in particular extension of towns in the adjacent valleys upslope.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- 12.19 **Key strategic objectives are to conserve and enhance the relatively small scale landscape structure and associated historic landscape character. Settlement is small in scale and of a dispersed rural character, and should be conserved, in order to retain the tranquil character of the area.**

### ***Landscape Management***

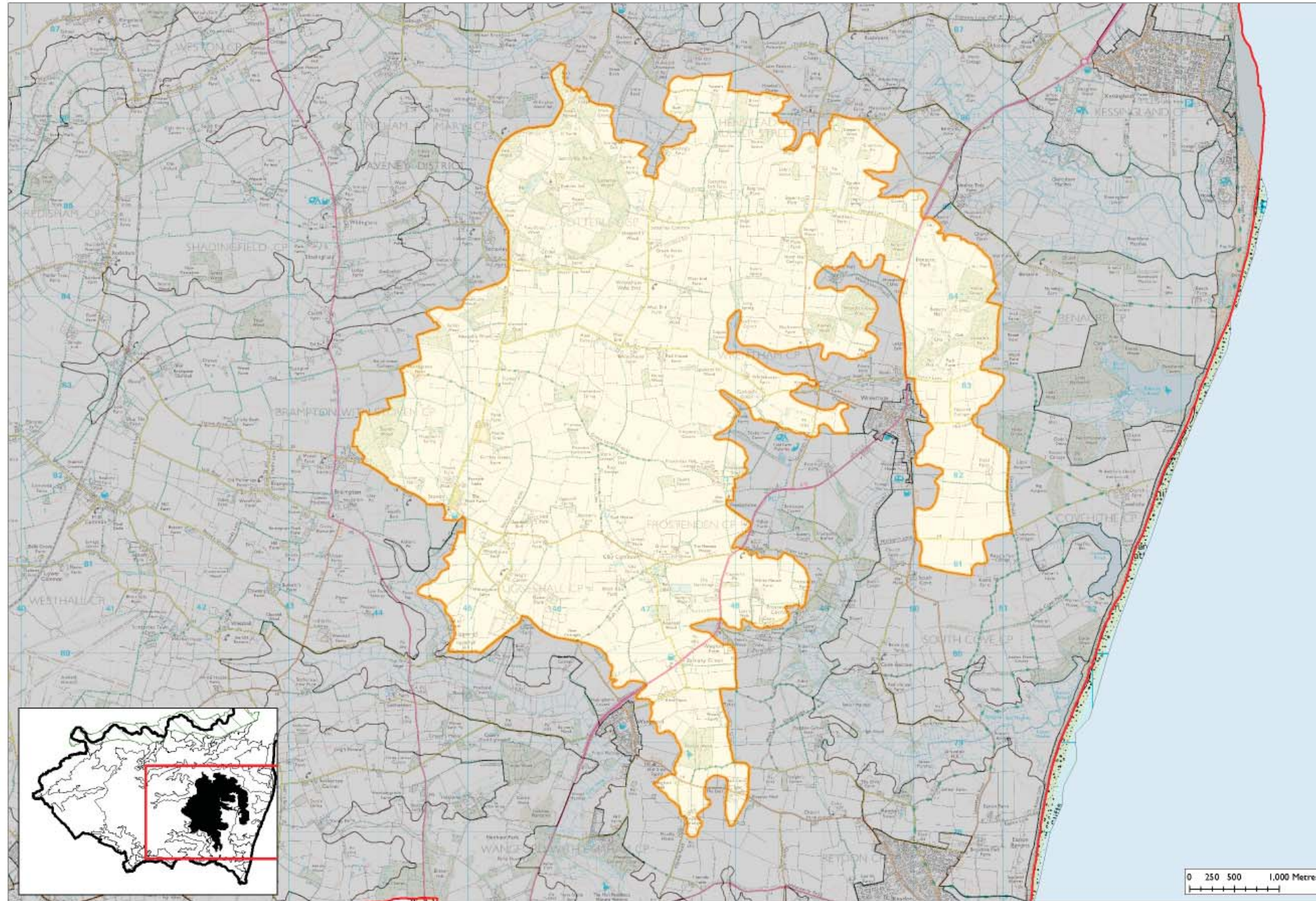
- 12.20 Principal landscape management objectives are to conserve and enhance the strong co axial field boundary pattern which persists across much of the character area. Opportunities to enhance existing hedgerows should also be sought, through gapping up and reinforcement of existing native hedgerows with appropriate species (e.g. hawthorn, common privet, dogwood, hazel) in order to enhance landscape structure and opportunities for connectivity. New native hedgerow oak tree planting should also be considered as part of the long term approach to hedgerow management and enhancement and to plan for long term continuity as existing mature hedgerow trees reach senescence.

- 12.21 Consideration should also be given to creation of further small scale farm woodland adjacent to existing woodland footprints to ensure continuity of cover and enhancement of habitat connectivity. Existing commons and village greens/tyes should be conserved and enhanced/restored.

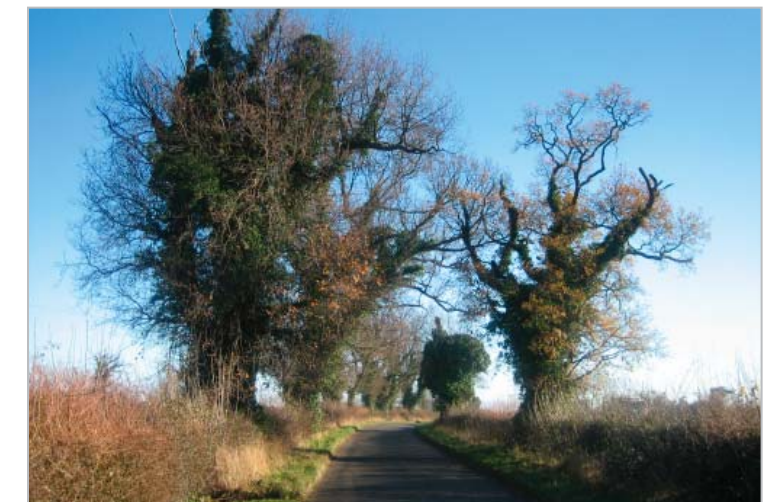
***Considerations in relation to development***

- 12.22 Conserve and enhance the existing wooded settings and low key approaches to the areas of settlement, such as narrow rural lanes and grassy, tree lined verges. The commons and village greens are important to the setting of settlements and their rural character and should be conserved. Development should retain the rural character of the landscape and make reference to indigenous vernacular materials. The dispersed character of the hamlets within the area should be conserved, maintaining a sense of separation between them, avoiding infill especially in relation to linear settlements along roads. Large scale, mass woodland planting would not be appropriate in this open plateau landscape, although small farm woodlands of a similar scale and composition/distribution to the existing network of woodland blocks could be accommodated.
- 12.23 Further extension of the valley settlement (Halesworth in Blyth Valley, and Beccles in the Waveney Valley) into this more open, plateau landscape should be closely monitored and avoid creation of an exposed town edge.
- 12.24 Conserve views to prominent features such as church towers.





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## I3: SOTTERLEY AND BENACRE PLATEAU

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### Location and Boundaries

- 13.1 *Sotterley and Benacre Plateau* occupies the elevated arable farmland which forms the backdrop to the valley farmlands and coastal landscapes in the east of Waveney District. The character area is defined primarily by Lowestoft Till drift deposits and by the 20m AOD contour, with the western boundary with the adjacent *Saints Plateau - East* character area defined by the relatively dense distribution of ancient woodland within the character area. The eastern part of the character area adjacent to the *North Suffolk Sandlings* has a transitional quality, partly influenced by lighter, sandy soils.

### Key Characteristics

- A Crag – Sand bedrock geology is thickly overlain with drift deposits of Lowestoft Till formation. Landform is that of a gently undulating plateau with topography ranging from 20-25m AOD;
- Slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged soils overlay Lowestoft Till deposits in much of the character area, with more free draining sandy soils overlaying glaciofluvial drift in the eastern part of the area;
- Predominant landcover is that of arable cultivation, set within a rectilinear field pattern of variable scale. Field boundaries are defined by mixed native hedgerows with mature hedgerow oak trees;
- Historic parklands and wooded parklands are a distinctive and prominent skyline feature of the plateau, notably at Sotterley and Benacre;
- Blocks of ancient semi natural woodland and areas of plantation on footprints of former ancient woodland create vertical elements and visual variety, breaking up the arable landscape;
- Landform is lower than for many other plateau areas and views are often framed, and contained by woodland and the density of field boundary vegetation, with wooded skylines often evident;
- Ecological interest is also represented in the historic parklands at Sotterley which is designated SSSI on account of its veteran trees, which accommodate a rich lichen flora and incorporate remnants of an ancient semi natural hornbeam-ash woodland to the perimeter;
- Cultural pattern is represented by the 18<sup>th</sup> Century II bay house at Benacre Park and by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century hall at Sotterley, which incorporates the 14<sup>th</sup> Century church of St Margaret in its grounds;
- Settlement is defined by isolated farmsteads and small scale hamlets of dispersed character lining the rural road network at points e.g. at Sotterley;



- A landscape of simple composition with a relatively intimate spatial scale created by the intact landscape fabric and landcover pattern;
- The landscape is tranquil and often remote in character, although a network of rights of way facilitates access for recreation, as do areas of Access Land on remnant commons.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- 13.2 A bedrock geology of Crag – Sand is overlain with thick drift deposits of Lowestoft Till formation. The topography is that of a gently undulating plateau, with landform ranging from 20-25m AOD across the area. The till deposits are overlain with slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged soils in much of the character area, with glaciofluvial drift material in the east overlain with lighter, more sandy soils.
- 13.3 Arable cultivation represents the predominant landcover, often set within a rectilinear, hedged field boundary network of varying scale. Mixed native field boundary hedgerows and mature hedgerow oak trees create the landscape structure, although variation is provided by historic wooded parklands e.g. Benacre and parklands incorporating ancient woodland e.g. Sotterley, which form prominent elements of the plateau.
- 13.4 The wooded parkland and ancient woodlands at Sotterley have significant ecological interest, recognised in the SSSI designation. Sotterley Park is designated for its veteran trees which accommodate a diverse lichen flora, and the remains of the ancient semi natural hornbeam-ash woodland to the parkland boundary. Grassy verges and relict commons are evident in the area to the south of Sotterley, which is identified as a Grassland Core Area by the Ecological Network Mapping Project. Opportunities for heathland creation are identified to the northern, eastern and southern edges of the area by the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project.

### **Historic Character**

- 13.5 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have had expression upon landscape character. These include post medieval parkland at Sotterley and Benacre, pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure (of random field patterns) across much of the central part of the area and post 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure to the east of Sotterley Park. Areas of field boundary loss (associated with mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification) are apparent in the northern and southernmost parts of the area.
- 13.6 Hodkinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk shows the parkland of Sotterley largely at its current extent, with its distinctive oval boundary clearly apparent. Benacre Park is identified as being in the ownership of Thomas Gooch. Large scale commonland is also apparent at Sotterley, although this has been mostly lost to Enclosure. A minor hall is identified at Gold's Green and this exists today as Uggeshall Hall.

- 13.7 Principal extant elements of the cultural landscape include the 18<sup>th</sup> Century halls of Benacre and Sotterley, in addition to their surrounding designed landscapes and parkland estates.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- 13.8 This is a landscape characterised by small scale hamlets of dispersed, scattered pattern and very low density. Settlements are associated with a low key narrow rural road network which has changed little from the network plotted by Hodkinson on the 1783 Map.
- 13.9 Other evidence of settlement is provided by traditional brick built farmsteads occasionally associated with estates such as Sotterley, although there is little evidence of traditional vernacular character within the hamlets themselves.
- 13.10 The nucleated village of Wrentham is located on the eastern edge of the edge of the character area, and is defined by open, exposed settlement edges at points.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- 13.11 A medium scale landscape defined by rectilinear field boundaries, although of larger scale at points where a more eroded landscape structure is apparent. The presence of historic parkland and ancient woodlands which are often associated with these and/or clustered at the boundary with the adjacent tributary farmland area creates variety, visual interest and texture in what is otherwise a relatively simple arable plateau landscape defined by mixed native hedgerows and mature hedgerow oaks.
- 13.12 This is a landscape of simple, often muted colour palette although this is variable depending on arable cropping and seasonal change such as leafing out/autumn colouring.
- 13.13 Due to the small scale settlement pattern and the low key road network the landscape has a tranquil quality. This is a landscape of dark night skies and rural character.

## **EVALUATION**

- 13.14 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Mixed field boundary hedgerows and mature hedgerow oaks, which indicate the historic Enclosure landscape pattern;
- Historic parklands and wooded parklands, which illustrate the cultural landscape pattern;
- Ancient woodlands, which are of biodiversity value e.g. at Sotterley;

- Grassy verges and remnant commons, which are biodiversity interest and impart a sense of the historic character;
- Lightly settled, tranquil and rural character, with only small scale settlement and a low key road pattern apparent.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- 13.15 Key visual sensitivities are judged to be the containment provided by field boundary vegetation and the backdrop created by areas of woodland and wooded parkland skylines.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- 13.16 This is a managed agricultural landscape which displays a number of intact historic elements in the form of wooded parklands and dense, treed mixed native Enclosure field boundary hedgerows, which create a good landscape structure and habitat connectivity.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Emparking of land at Sotterley and Benacre Halls;
- Parliamentary Enclosure and the creation of the field boundary structure;
- Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification and areas of attendant field boundary loss.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

- 13.17 Potential future landscape change may arise through further field boundary restoration and reinforcement through the implementation of agri environment schemes. Crop diversification for example through biofuels or new arable crops may also result in landscape change. Further development is considered unlikely in this elevated rural landscape, and the extant Local Plan does not identify any allocations for residential development.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- 13.18 **The primary strategic objective for this character area is to conserve and enhance the Enclosure landscape pattern and the strong sense of place and landscape integrity created by the parklands and their landscape setting. Conserve and enhance relict commons and verges. Conserve the tranquil, rural character of the landscape.**

### ***Landscape Management***

- 13.19 Principal landscape management considerations relate to conservation and enhancement of the Enclosure field boundary network, through gapping up with native species and reinforcing with new hedgerow tree planting where appropriate.

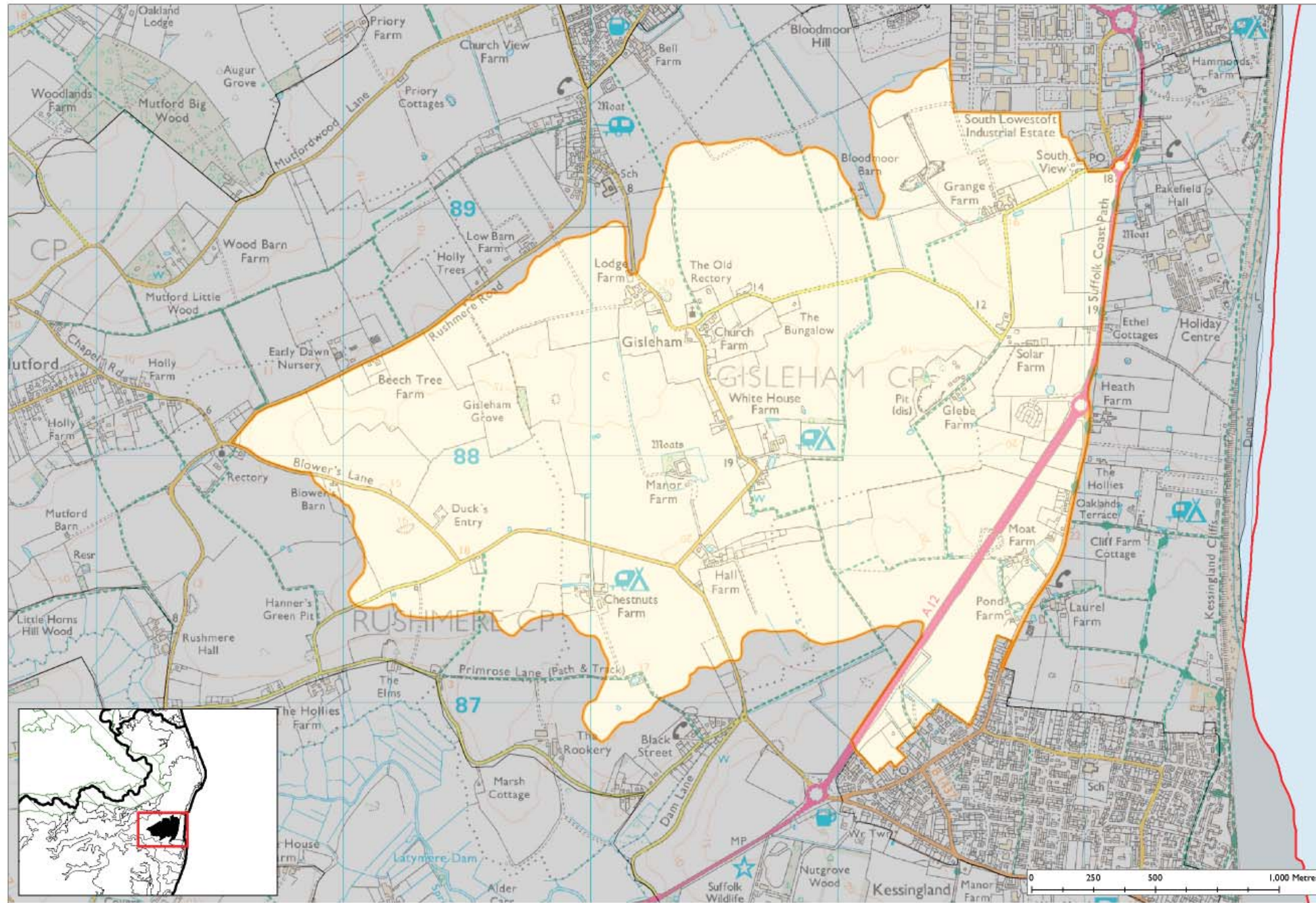
New hedgerow trees should be planned to replace existing mature trees as these reach senescence. The wooded parklands and ancient woodlands/veteran trees which form the landscape setting to historic halls such as Sotterley and Benacre should be conserved. Conserve and enhance remaining commons and grassy verges/roadside margins to enhance opportunities for habitat linkages.

***Considerations in relation to development***

- 13.20 Development considerations relate primarily to conserving the network of narrow, unlit rural roads and the low key influence of settlement (e.g. dispersed, small scale character), in addition to exploring opportunities to integrate exposed settlement edges e.g. at Wrentham.







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## I4: GISLEHAM PLATEAU

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### Location and Boundaries

- 14.1 *Gisleham Plateau* is a small, discrete area of relatively elevated land located in the eastern part of Waveney District between Kessingland and Lowestoft. It is bounded by the *Pakefield to Benacre Coastal Cliffs* character area to its eastern edge and by the *Hundred Tributary Valley Farmland* to the west. Defined by the 10-15m AOD contour and the extent of drift geology, the character area forms a low plateau which is fringed by tributary valley farmlands.

### Key Characteristics

- A crag bedrock geology overlain with drift deposits of Lowestoft Tills composed of sand and gravels. Seams of Aldeby Sands and Gravels encircle the plateau marking the tributary valleys which fringe the area;
- Clayey soils overlain by finer loamy/sandy soils create an arable landscape with farm ponds often apparent;
- Topography ranges from 10-20m AOD resulting in a largely flat landscape with little landform variation;
- Landcover is characterised by medium to large scale irregular arable fields defined by mixed native hedgerows of variable density and quality and occasional drainage ditches. Hedgerow oaks are prominent;
- The area is characterised by an 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure landscape pattern in the eastern half, with the western half displaying a larger scale landscape which is the product of 20<sup>th</sup> Century boundary loss;
- Principal elements of the cultural landscape are the round towered church at Gisleham, together with the moated site at Manor Farm;
- Settlement is defined by the compact hamlet of Gisleham and a network of winding rural roads breaking the arable field pattern, although the lit A12 trunk road corridor is also notable;
- The banded mineral extraction site off the A12 to the south of Lowestoft is a prominent feature of many views within this open arable landscape. Glimpsed views to parts of the coast are possible, albeit largely screened by resort development;
- To the fringes of the character area significant urbanising influences are apparent, such as the industrial estates to the southern edge of Lowestoft, the north western edge of Kessingland and resort type development south of Pakefield;
- A simple arable landscape with little texture, but with vestiges of the Enclosure landscape pattern providing some visual interest and variety. The influences of built development markedly reduce tranquillity;

- Evidence of recreational usage is provided by the network of rights of way which cross the area, in addition to the camp site south of Gisleham.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- 14.2 Drift deposits of Lowestoft Till composed of sands and gravels overlay a Crag – Sand bedrock geology. The plateau is encircled by seams of Aldeby sands and gravels, associated with the tributaries which drain from the plateau to lower lying land.
- 14.3 This is a largely flat landscape, with little landform variation. Topography ranges from 10m AOD to the north of the hamlet of Gisleham to 20m AOD at Hall Farm. Further landform variation is created by the bunded, redundant mineral workings at Glebe Farm, near the A12 corridor.
- 14.4 Soils include slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged loamy over clay soils, associated with chalky till drift deposits, across much of the central part of the area. The area is fringed by deep, well drained coarse and erosion prone sandy soils, reflected in the transitional ‘Sandlings’ character of lower lying land adjacent to the character area.
- 14.5 The landscape pattern of the area is that of medium to large scale arable fields of irregular formation, defined by variable mixed native field boundary hedgerows in addition to ditches at points. Hedgerow oaks are a prominent feature of the plateau landscape, and some recent native hedgerow planting is apparent.
- 14.6 No data is provided by the Ecological Network Mapping Project although opportunities for heathland creation are identified by the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project to the western and northern boundaries of the area.

### **Historic Character**

- 14.7 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have had expression upon the present day character of the landscape. These include 18<sup>th</sup> Century and later Parliamentary Enclosure to the east of Gisleham and mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agriculture and associated intensification in the western half of the area.
- 14.8 Hodkinson’s 1783 Map of Suffolk identifies the minor hamlet of Gisleham and associated church, which are extant today. Also identified on the 1783 Map are areas of common at Muthall and heathland to the south of Gisleham, although these have subsequently been lost to Enclosure and agricultural intensification.
- 14.9 Principal extant elements of the cultural landscape include the Romanesque round towered parish church of Holy Trinity at Gisleham, and a moated site (SMR) at Manor Farm, to the south west of Gisleham.

## **Settlement and Built Character**

- 14.10 This landscape is strongly influenced by the settled character of adjacent areas and of the coast at this point. However, with the exception of isolated farmsteads, the compact hamlet of Gisleham is the only settlement within the character area. Gisleham is a traditional vernacular hamlet of red brick and clay pantile, centred on the junction of minor rural roads, and with a round towered church forming the settlement focus. The settlement has a wooded edge and is also characterised by later 20<sup>th</sup> Century extensions to parts of the edge.
- 14.11 There is a strong sense of built intervention and disturbance (albeit indirect and to the area's fringes) within this small character area, due to the presence of the banded landfill site and the lit A12 trunk road corridor which follows the eastern edge of the area. Large scale resort development within the adjacent coastal character area, to the east of the A12, is also a significant influence, as is the presence of the industrial estates to the southern edge of Lowestoft.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- 14.12 This is a simple and relatively exposed elevated arable plateau landscape. As such views are often panoramic and there is intervisibility with a number of elements in adjacent character areas such as the resort development within the adjacent coastal character area and the southern edge of Lowestoft. Wooded skylines are apparent at points, creating a backdrop and sense of containment. The eroded field boundary pattern creates a landscape of relatively large scale and simple, monotonous composition.
- 14.13 Colour palette is muted, although may be seasonally varied depending on arable cropping. This is a landscape of smooth texture and comparatively little variation, although features such as the lit A12 corridor and the banded former mineral extraction site create localised interruptions. The western part of the character area is tranquil and remote in character, due to the small scale settlement pattern and the narrow rural road network. To the eastern part of the area, tranquillity is markedly affected by the presence of the A12 corridor and the resort development beyond, in addition to the settlement edge at Lowestoft.

## **EVALUATION**

- 14.14 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Remaining mature hedgerow oak trees which impart a sense of the historic landscape character and landscape structure;
- Tranquil and remote character to the west;
- Moated sites such as at Manor Farm which illustrate the historic settlement pattern;

- Ditched field boundaries which provide localised landscape variation;
- Areas of open coastal land between Lowestoft and Kessingland.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- 14.15 In areas where field boundaries have been removed there is a more open and exposed character, allowing longer views. The church tower at Gisleham forms a prominent element of views. Wooded skylines form the backdrop to views at points and represent another key visual sensitivity.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- 14.16 This is a managed and productive, predominantly arable agricultural landscape. Agricultural intensification has eroded the field boundary structure and landscape character in places, with potential attendant implications for ecological integrity and habitat connectivity. Detracting features such as the bunded landfill site and the exposed edge created by industrial estate development within Lowestoft/holiday resort development have influenced the quality of the current landscape.
- 14.17 A sense of the historic landscape is provided in localised areas, due to the presence of mature hedgerow oaks, narrow rural lanes and more intact areas of hedgerow.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Parliamentary Enclosure and associated loss of commons/heathland;
- Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural intensification and attendant boundary loss;
- Mineral extraction;
- Expansion to the edge of Lowestoft and coastal resort development within the adjacent character area which has infringed upon the character area; and
- Dualling of the A12 to form a trunk road.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

- 14.18 Potential future change may arise through coastal erosion within the adjacent coastal character area and 'inlanding' of coastal features. The areas of open coastal land between Lowestoft and Kessingland are sensitive to further change.
- 14.19 Further change may arise through landscape enhancements associated with agri environment schemes (recent tree and hedgerow planting is already evident within the character area).

### **Strategic Objectives**

- 14.20 **Key strategic objectives are to mitigate the urbanising influence of built development and infrastructure which fringes the area, through**

**enhancement and restoration of the field boundary pattern, and further native planting to settlement edges and the A12 corridor to fulfil a noise/light attenuation function.**

***Landscape Management***

- 14.21 Principal landscape management considerations relate to enhancement of field boundary planting and the structural landscape. The recently instigated hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting (through the implementation of agri environment schemes) should be extended and further opportunities sought for new boundary planting to enhance connectivity and habitat linkages.

***Considerations in relation to development***

- 14.22 The sense of separation between settlements such as Lowestoft and Kessingland should be maintained. Conserve the connection to and character of the open coastal land within the adjacent *Great Yarmouth Coastal Strip* area, avoiding the introduction of further development, as the character of this area is already influenced by coastal resort type development and by development to the edge of Lowestoft.
- 14.23 Native structural planting should be used to tie development and settlement edges in to the wider landscape, avoiding exposed edges. It could also be used to fulfil an attenuation function for the lit A12 corridor.
- 14.24 The use of artificial landforms such as bunding is not appropriate in this relatively open, exposed plateau landscape.





## J: ESTUARINE MARSH

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- J This landscape type considers the low lying marshes and broad coastal estuaries associated with the river valleys. It contains three local character areas. The landscape type is defined by the extent of drift deposits and the presence of distinctive marshland vegetation including reedbed and areas of grazing marsh.

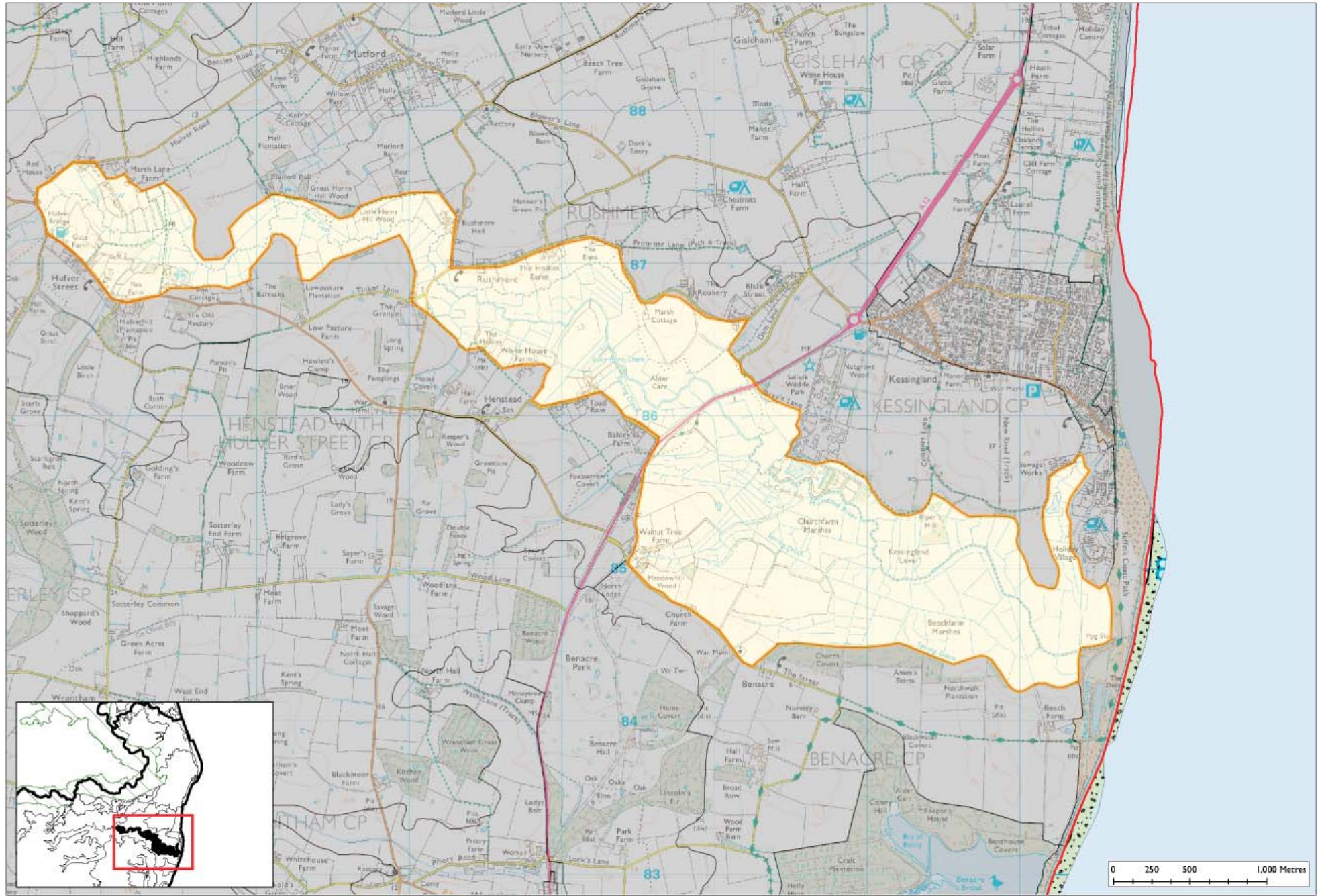
### Key Characteristics

- The Crag bedrock geology is overlain with drift deposits of peats and by tidal flat deposits, in addition to narrow bands of sand and gravels to the valley sides;
- Landforms are those of broad, shallow estuarine valleys, with topography ranging from 0m AOD (valley floors) to 5m AOD (valley crests);
- Flood prone peat soils create varied wetland landscapes including such elements as fen, reed and marsh. Rush pasture and wet meadow are also distinctive;
- To the coast, further variation is apparent with semi vegetated shingle spits and bars;
- Area of reedbed create the impression of simple landscapes, masking the intricate network of tributary watercourses and field boundary ditches;
- Pollard willows often defined field boundaries within areas of grazing marsh, creating vertical elements and visual variety;

- An often exposed, open landscape type, with panoramic views available across the marshes and reedbeds with wooded skylines of the adjacent *Sandlings* landscape type forming a distinctive backdrop.

<b>Landscape Type J: Estuarine Marsh</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>J1</b>	<b>Hundred River Marshes</b>
<b>J2</b>	<b>Pottersbridge Marshes</b>
<b>J3</b>	<b>Blyth Estuary</b>





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# J1: HUNDRED RIVER MARSHES

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## Location and Boundaries

J1.1 *Hundred River Marshes* is located on the eastern side of Waveney District, encompassing the estuarine reaches of the Hundred Valley to the south of Kessingland. The easternmost part of the character area lies within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. The character area boundaries are defined by topography and the extent of the drift geology deposits and marshland vegetation.

## Key Characteristics

- A Crag – Sand bedrock geology is overlain with peat deposits in the valley floor and extensive tidal flat deposition to the east;
- Glaciofluvial drift deposits of sands and gravels are apparent in narrow bands to the valley sides;
- A broad, flat valley, with shallow valley sides of subtle definition. Topography ranges from 0m AOD in the valley floor to 5m AOD to the valley crests which lie within the character area;
- Soils include peat soils (associated with fen peat deposits) prone to flooding and waterlogging, and calcareous, clayey soils in flat areas of the estuarine valley floor, creating a landscape of fen, reed and marsh;
- To the coast, sandy soils are associated with dune sand and marine shingle deposits creating low shingle spits at the mouth of the Hundred Estuary;
- Predominant landcover is that of marsh and reedbed, together with areas of wetland/rush pasture associated with the Hundred River in the western part of the character area. Pollard willows are distinctive;
- Panoramic views are available across the marshes, to the low south facing ridge on which Kessingland is sited and the wooded parklands of Benacre to the south. Church towers are prominent as at Benacre;
- The ecological interest and geodiversity of the area is recognised in the nature conservation designations, with the mouth of the river, beach and dunes forming part of Pakefield to Easton Bavents SSSI and the Benacre to Easton Bavents SPA, which provides habitat for waders and wildfowl;
- Cultural pattern is represented by the halls and minor parklands which fringe the character area, notably Rushmere Hall and the Jacobean house at Mutford Hall;
- Swathes of marsh and reed create the impression of a simple landscape, masking the intricate network of ditches and dykes, and the meandering course of the Hundred River;



- Areas of rush pasture set within ditches, wetland meadow and field boundaries defined by pollard willows create further texture and visual interest;
- A sparsely settled landscape, with settlement confined to compact hamlets to the valley sides e.g. Rushmere and isolated traditional farmsteads;
- The sense of tranquillity and wildness is locally interrupted by the presence of the busy A12 linking Lowestoft and Southwold.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- J1.2 The Crag – Sand bedrock geology is overlain with deposits of peat in the broad valley floor in addition to extensive deposition of tidal flats in the eastern part of the character area, and narrow bands of glaciofluvial sands and gravels to the shallow valley sides. Topography ranges from 0m AOD within the valley floor to 5m AOD to the often wooded valley crests, resulting in a broad, shallow, well defined valley.
- J1.3 A wetland landscape of fen, reed and marsh has been created within the estuarine valley floor, overlaying flood prone peat soils and calcareous, clayey soils. Wetland grazing pasture set within a network of field boundary ditches and veteran pollard willows is also characteristic of the valley floor to the west of the A12. Small scale blocks of carr woodland punctuate the valley floor at points. Tributaries intersect the landscape, creating an intricate landscape pattern and draining into the minor Hundred River, which follows a meandering course through the valley, opening into a minor estuary near Beachfarm Marshes.
- J1.4 The coastal edge of the character area is defined by sandy soils and marine shingle deposits which create a series of low shingle spits to the mouth of the Hundred Estuary. The ecological interest of the coastal and marshland landscape which provides habitat for a range of waders, is recognised in the SSSI and SPA designation at Pakefield - Easton Bavents. The SSSI is designated for its flood plain fen habitat (including an assemblage of nationally rare and scarce plant species) and for its coastal geomorphology (an erosion prone beach 'ridge' which fronts the Denes to the mouth of the estuary, in addition to the strata exhibited in the low coastal cliffs). Much of the marshland and wet pasture to the remainder of the valley floor as far as Latymere Dam to the west is identified as being of more than local ecological interest through its designation as a County Wildlife Site.
- J1.5 The Ecological Network Mapping Project identifies much of the area as a Core Area and a Wetland Habitat Zone. Some of the transitional land to the fringe of the area adjacent to the *North Suffolk Sandlings* is identified for potential heathland linkages by the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project.

### Historic Character

- J1.6 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies the primary historic landscape process affecting the areas as that of wetland and meadow management.

Comparatively few influences have affected the present day character of the landscape, other than the management of the marshes for grazing.

- J1.7 Hodskinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk identifies the presence of dams and sluices which were constructed as areas of marshland were drained and managed for grazing. A number of these are extant today. Also apparent on the 1783 map is a large coastal lagoon, which exists in a greatly reduced form within the adjacent coastal character area.
- J1.8 Other elements of the cultural landscape include managed grazing marsh and veteran pollard willows which mark field boundary ditches. A number of halls and minor parklands fringe the character area, notably the Elizabethan stepped gable house at Rushmere Hall and the 17<sup>th</sup> Century house at Mutford Hall.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- J1.9 This is a sparsely settled marshland landscape with only isolated farmsteads of traditional thatch and white lime plaster apparent within an otherwise remote, empty valley floor. With the exception of the A12 corridor which bisects the character area, roads crossing the valley floor are limited to narrow, winding rural lanes.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- J1.10 An intricate landscape mosaic is created by the network of tributaries and field boundary ditches which thread through the character area, and by the narrow meandering course of the Hundred River within the valley floor. Considerable visual variety and texture is created by the presence of wetland meadow, rush pasture and reedbed, in addition to the distinctive veteran pollard willows, which in addition to isolated blocks of carr woodland provide the few vertical markers in an otherwise flat low lying landscape.
- J1.11 Rush pasture and wetland meadow, in addition to reed bed combine to create a landscape of colourful character and distinctive sense of place. This is a landscape of variable scale with the swathes of reeds towards the mouth of the estuary creating the perception of a large scale landscape and masking the complex landscape mosaic beneath. Views at this point are wide and panoramic, although they become more contained within the intimate pastoral landscape to the west of the A12. Visual containment is provided by the low wooded ridge to the south on which Benacre Park is located and by the rising farmland to the north towards the settlement of Kessingland, where the church tower and water tower form prominent skyline elements.
- J1.12 A tranquil, pastoral landscape to the west of the A12, although tranquillity is reduced by the presence of the lit A12 corridor which is a significant and divisive element. The presence of resort development and the visually cluttered skyline associated with the lit settlement edge of Kessingland to the north of the area also detract from the rural character of the area.

## **EVALUATION**

- Jl.13 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Marsh, rush pasture and reed habitats, both for their biodiversity value and visual quality;
- Pollard willows, which are historic relics of the field pattern and traditional landscape management practices;
- Remote, often tranquil and sparsely settled character.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- Jl.14 Key visual sensitivities include the wooded skylines formed by Benacre Park to the south and the views to the church tower and exposed settlement edge of Kessingland to the north. Area of reedbed and the pollard willows create a landscape of contained visual character.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- Jl.15 This is a managed, often grazed pastoral landscape with significant ecological diversity created by the landscape mosaic of reedbed, rush pasture, wet meadow and pollard willows.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Drainage of the marshes for grazing;
- Creation of the wooded designed landscape at Benacre to the edge of the area;
- Encroachment of coastal resort development at Kessingland to the margins of the area;
- Construction of the A12, linking Lowestoft and Southwold.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

- Jl.16 Potential future change may arise through climate change and the associated rising sea levels, in addition to salt water ingress and 'inlanding' of coastal habitats, in light of the approach to be adopted in the future Shoreline Management Plan. Resort and seafront development to the edge of Kessingland which has already encroached upon the margins of the area may continue to be an issue.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- Jl.17 **The primary strategic objective for the character area is to conserve and enhance the estuarine/marshland character and the mosaic of wetland habitats including grazing marsh, rush pasture and wetland meadow. The containment provided by the wooded valley crests and the simple, uncluttered skylines should be conserved.**

### ***Landscape Management***

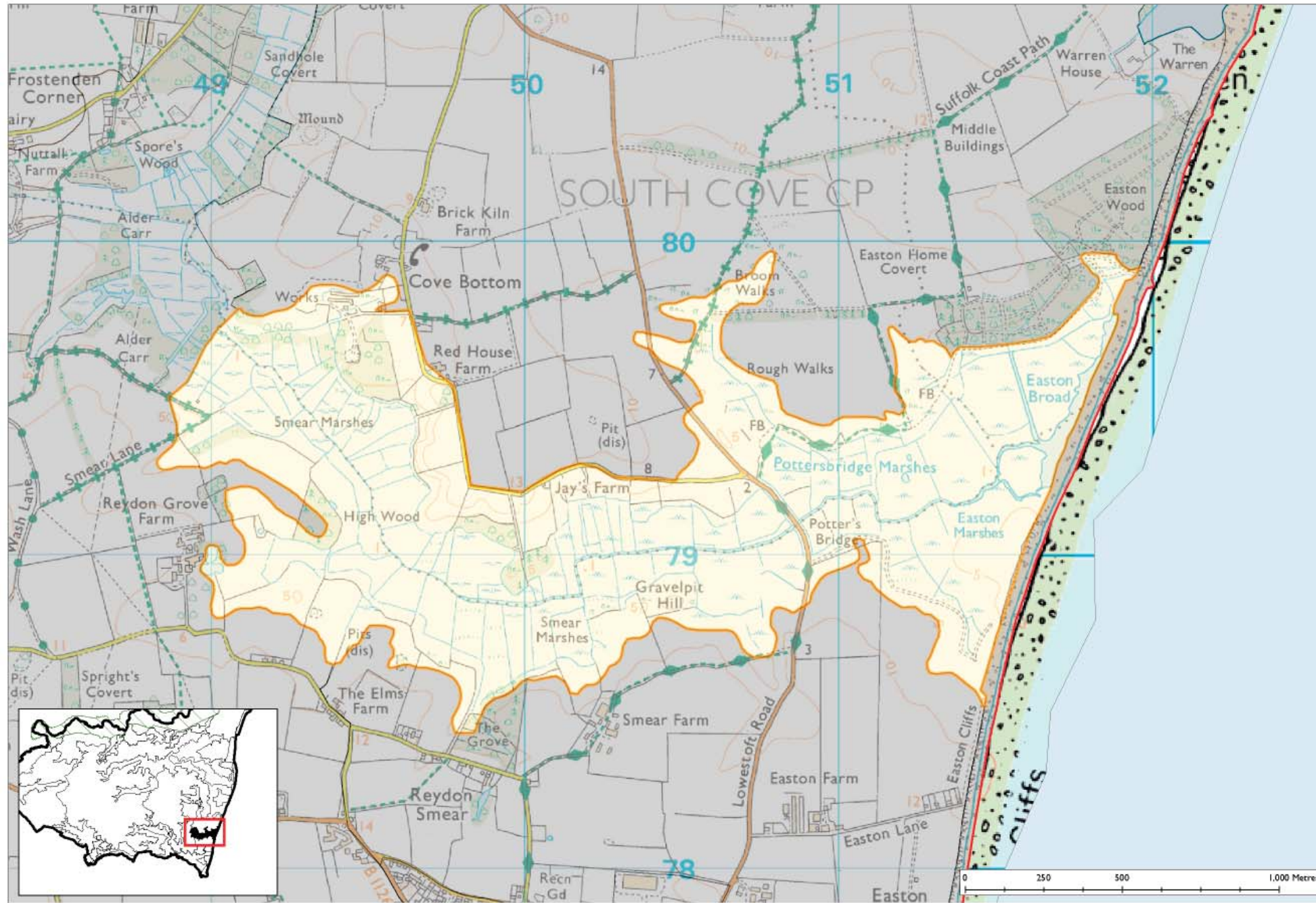
- Jl.18 Principal landscape management objectives relate to conservation and enhancement of the willow pollards through active management to prolong their lifespan, in addition to conserving areas of reedbed and rush pasture, whilst seeking opportunities to extend and reinforce wetland habitats along the network of tributaries and ditches which thread the character area. Areas of grazing marsh should be conserved and enhanced, seeking opportunities to extend and reinforce, along with reedbeds, in light of the potential 'inlanding' of coastal habitats due to rising sea levels.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- Jl.19 Development considerations should relate primarily to maintaining the sparsely settled, tranquil rural character, and to monitoring the effects of the lit settlement edge and resort development at Kessingland on what is a predominantly dark night time landscape. Lighting to the A12 corridor should be avoided in this respect.







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## J2: POTTERSBRIDGE MARSHES

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### Location and Boundaries

- J2.1 The character area is an area of low lying marsh located in the southern half of Waveney District, approximately 1km north of Southwold. The character area is bisected by the Lowestoft Road and its boundaries are defined by the extent of drift deposits and rising topography within adjacent areas. It incorporates a small part of the coastal broads at Easton Broad. The character area falls entirely within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

### Key Characteristics

- A Norwich Crag bedrock geology is overlain with drift deposits of river alluvium and fen peat, in addition to areas of sands, silts and gravels, creating a broad shallow valley of distinctive coastal marsh/estuarine character;
- Topography ranges from 0-3m AOD in the valley floor, with the valley crests (5m AOD) outside the character area, and topographic variation is only subtly perceived due to the density of reed vegetation;
- Acidic, deep peat soils overlay peat deposits, giving rise to a landscape prone to waterlogging and flooding;
- Landcover is that of marsh and reed bed, cut by a network of minor ditches, dykes and streams which cross the area. Rush pasture and hedged field boundaries are also apparent to the fringes of the area;
- A network of wetland features crosses the area, terminating at Easton Broad and the low coastal shingle spit at Easton Bavents, although views of these are obscured by the density of reed vegetation;
- A landscape of contained character due to the density of marsh and reed vegetation;
- Features within adjacent character areas such as the low wooded ridges, arable fields and scots pine lines contain the marshland and create the backdrop to views across it;
- There is an absence of built development. With the exception of the Lowestoft Road which crosses the area, the only other built influences are the isolated farmsteads which overlook the area;
- This is a landscape of bold, simple quality, with a wild and windswept aspect. Perceived wildness and elemental character are enhanced by the sonorous effect of movement and wind within the reed vegetation.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- J2.2 A broad shallow valley is created by a Norwich Crag bedrock geology. The bedrock is overlain with drift deposits of river alluvium and fen peat, in addition to areas of sands, silts and gravels. Drift deposits such as peat create a landscape of distinctive estuarine, marshland character. Topography ranges from 0-3m AOD to the valley floor, with the valley crests (outside the character area) defined by the 5m AOD contour.
- J2.3 Soils including acid, deep peat soils overlay the drift deposits, creating a landscape prone to waterlogging and vulnerable to flooding. Principal landcover is that of marshland with extensive swathes of reedbed, although grazing marsh, rush pasture and field boundary hedgerows are also evident to the margins of the area.
- J2.4 The density of reedbed vegetation in the valley floor masks an intricate network of hydrological features including wet ditches which define field boundaries of intimate scale and a narrow meandering watercourse which leads to the coastal broad at Easton Broad, to the mouth of the estuary.
- J2.5 Ecological interest is represented by the nature conservation designations within the area, including the Pakefield to Easton Bavents SSSI and the Benacre to Easton Bavents SPA (also Benacre National Nature Reserve), which cover most of the valley floor. The valley floor to the east of the Lowestoft Road also forms part of the Benacre to Easton Bavents SAC. The SSSI is designated for its flood plain fen habitat (including an assemblage of nationally rare and scarce plant species) and for its coastal geomorphology, in addition to the geological interest of the low crag coastal cliffs which fringe the mouth of the estuary.
- J2.6 The Ecological Network Mapping Project identifies the area around Easton Broad and Easton Marshes as a Core Area, with the majority of the area falling within a Wetland Habitat Zone. Small parts of the transitional land within the area boundaries are identified as zones for potential heathland by the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project.

### Historic Character

- J2.7 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies a number of historic processes which have had landscape expression and these include 18<sup>th</sup> Century parliamentary enclosure to the valley sides, on the site of former commonland, heath and open pasture. Much of the valley floor is identified as managed wetland.
- J2.8 Hodskinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk shows swathes of commonland extending into the valley floor, although these have been lost to later Enclosure and to wetland management regimes. The Lowestoft Road and Potters Bridge (which remain extant today) are also clearly identified. Easton Broad is shown on the 1783 map as being a significantly larger water body than that which exists today, with the extents of the water body subsequently greatly reduced by coastal action and the shifting of the shingle spit which marks the coastal extents of the area.

## **Settlement and Built Character**

- J2.9 With the exception of a small number of isolated farmsteads (often brick built) to the valley crest and the Lowestoft Road which bisects the area, this is a remote, wild and unsettled landscape.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- J2.10 This is a landscape of seemingly large scale and bold simple quality/elements, although the swathes of marshland and reed bed habitat in reality conceal a textured, intricate landscape of small spatial scale, defined by a network of wet ditches and narrow meandering watercourses.
- J2.11 Juxtaposition of reedbed and marsh with areas of grazing marsh and rush pasture set within an Enclosure network of mixed field boundary hedgerows, creates a landscape of textured character at points and of considerable variety. A colourful landscape results from the interplay of wet meadow and rush pasture with areas of reed bed. Colour is further affected by variation in light and reflected light, shadow and cloud.
- J2.12 Panoramic views are available across much of the valley floor, although containment is created by the low wooded ridges and the scots pine lines beyond the valley crests, within the adjacent *North Suffolk Sandlings* area. A coastal character is evident to the exposed saltmarsh towards Easton Broad, although views to the Broad itself and to the sea are denied by the reed bed vegetation.
- J2.13 A wild, remote and often windswept landscape, with the perception of wildness often enhanced by the movement of wind and breeze through the reeds. The influence of settlement is slight, other than isolated farmsteads to the valley crests and the unlit Lowestoft Road which crosses the area.

## **EVALUATION**

- J2.14 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Swathes of marsh and reed bed which create a wild, elemental quality and a strong sense of place, as well as being important for biodiversity;
- Pine lines to the skyline within the adjacent character area, which create a sense of containment and legibility/orientation within the landscape;
- Area of rush pasture and a smaller agricultural landscape created by the hedgerow network to the valley sides, which provide further landscape variation.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

- J2.15 Key visual sensitivities are judged to be the open, exposed aspect and the simple, open skyline towards the coast, in addition to the visual containment created by

features to the valley crests, such as the scots pine lines and areas of woodland within the adjacent *North Suffolk Sandlings*, which frame and contain the character area.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

- J2.16 Much of the valley floor is managed as wetland meadow and reedbed to provide habitat for a wide variety of bird species, as part of Benacre National Nature Reserve. As such the area has a strong sense of place and landscape quality as an area of low lying marshland landscape and wetland habitat.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Loss of lowland commons and open pasture to wetland management regimes and to Parliamentary Enclosure to the margins of the area;
- Coastal erosion and action, including shifting of coastal spits and loss of parts of Easton Broad.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

- J2.17 Potential future change may arise through rising levels in light of climate change and continuing coastal erosion. The network of freshwater and also brackish habitats within the area is vulnerable to salt water ingress and is dependent upon the actions taken to implement the Shoreline Management Plan. Freshwater and brackish habitats could not be easily re created if lost.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- J2.18 **The primary strategic objective for the character area is to conserve the remote and wild marshland character, and to continue to manage the reed beds, marsh and wet meadow for the rich diversity of habitats they support.**

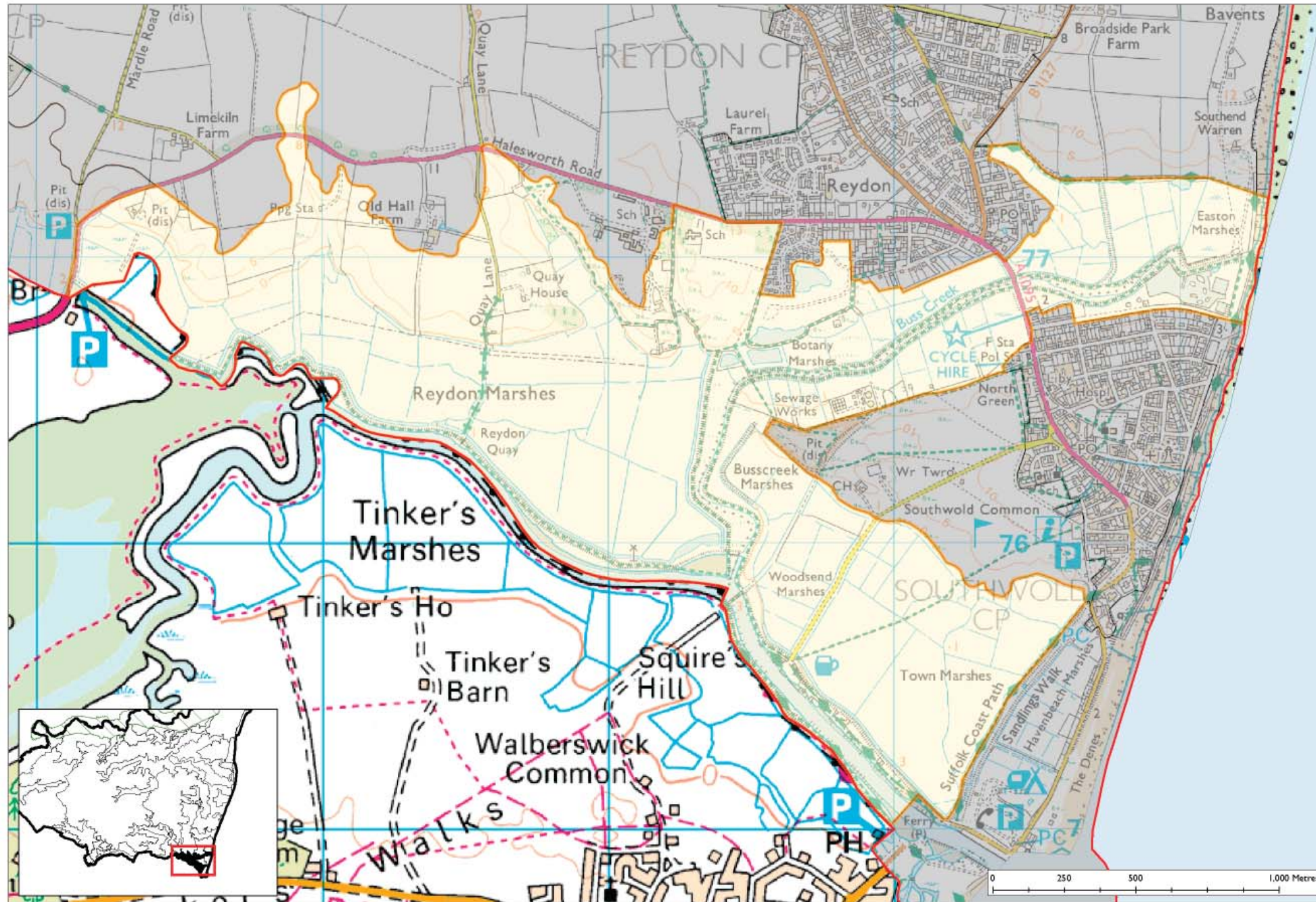
### ***Landscape Management***

- J2.19 Principal considerations should be to manage areas of reed bed to provide habitat for bird species, in addition to seeking opportunities to extend/create new areas of reed bed and to link areas of existing reed habitat. Many of the freshwater habitats within the character area are extremely vulnerable to salt water ingress and could not be easily recreated.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- J2.20 Considerations in relation to development should relate to maintaining the remote, wild and sparsely populated quality, preserving the dark night time character of the landscape (e.g. the unlit Lowestoft Road).





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## J3: THE BLYTH ESTUARY

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### Location and Boundaries

- J3.1 The Blyth Estuary terminates as an extensive area of coastal marsh, providing the backdrop and setting to the cliff top coastal town of Southwold. The Blyth itself marks the administrative boundary of Waveney District, with the marsh landscape itself extending to the south side of the estuary at Tinker's Marsh. The character area is entirely within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and Waveney District. Character area boundaries defined by the flat low lying topography (below sea level) and the extent of marshland vegetation.

### Key Characteristics

- Low lying broad flat estuary of the River Blyth, mainly below sea level;
- The Blythe River and Buss Creek cross the estuary through muddy channels, protected by engineered flood walls. Below sea level the waterways are barely perceptible in views across the marsh;
- Tidal flat deposits of clay and silt overlay the Crag - sand bedrock. Local variations in landform reflect the former course of the river. Small banks acts as flood embankments;
- Extensive areas of freshwater grazing marsh, meadows and reedbeds are protected from the sea by earth banks;
- Panoramic views across the marshes, to the low sandy cliff on which Southwold is located;
- Plantations and woods provide the backdrop on the adjacent subtly rising farmland, including the ornamental landscape associated with the school at Reydon. Tree cover is absent from the marshes;
- The ecological interest is recognised in the SSSI designation at Town Marsh where the grazing marsh supports high numbers of breeding wildfowl (part of the larger Minsmere- Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SSSI). Reydon Marshes and Easton Marshes are similarly valuable habitats (CWS);
- A simple, textured landscape of reedbeds and cattle grazed marsh concealing an intricate linear network of ditches and dykes. The deep ditches are sometime filled with vegetation including lines of colourful flag iris;
- Wide, open skies and sense of space with long distance vistas punctuated by church towers, water towers and mills and the masts and sails of boats;
- At Southwold the lighthouse, church and water tower are key landmarks and form a reference point on the horizon;

- At the mouth of the river (border with low coastal cliffs) Southwold harbour is a ramshackle collection of jetties, wooden huts and sheds on a remote channel;
- A 'remote' isolated unsettled landscape with an absence of settlement and a strong sense of tranquillity;
- The Suffolk estuaries are of known archaeological interest and include sites forming remnants of the Roman salt industry in Suffolk.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

### **Physical/Natural**

- J3.2 This is a typical estuary landscape and comprises a wide flat level floor mainly below sea level and rising at the edges to a low ridge at about 10 m AOD. The Crag – sand bedrock geology is overlain with clay and silt tidal flats deposits. The estuary comprises extensive areas of freshwater grazing marsh and reedbeds protected from the sea by earth banks. Ecological interest is recognised in the SSSI designation at Town Marsh where the grazing marsh supports high numbers of breeding wildfowl (part of the larger Minsmere- Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SSSI). Reydon Marshes and Easton Marshes are similarly valuable habitats (CWVS). The Blyth River and associated Buss Creek cross the marshes within deep muddy reinforced channels, and barely register in views across the wider area.
- J3.3 The ECONET survey identifies this area as a Wetland Habitat Zone.

### **Historic Character**

- J3.4 The estuary has a long history of navigation with development of commercial ports and quays and creation of a new cut of the river and harbour south of Southwold. Commercial use was not sustained after the mid twentieth century, and replaced by growing recreational use of the waterways.
- J3.5 The Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) classifies the area as 18<sup>th</sup> century and later enclosure, with a small area of higher land east of Reydon as pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Comparatively few influences have affected the present day character of the landscape, other than the management of the marshes for grazing. The estuarine marshes of Suffolk are of known archaeological interest, and are known to contain remnants of the Roman salt working industry.

### **Settlement and Built Character**

- J3.6 This is an unsettled estuary landscape. It has a remote, empty and isolated character, notably for the absence of buildings or roads. The only exception is Southwold harbour at the mouth of the river with its informal collection of wooden jetties, huts and sheds.

### **Perceptual/Visual**

- J3.7 The estuary is characterised by wide, open skies and sense of space with long distance vistas punctuated by church towers, water towers and mills, and the masts

and sails of boats. A 'remote' isolated unsettled landscape with an absence of settlement and a strong sense of tranquillity.

## **EVALUATION**

J3.8 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Extensive wetland habitats of grazing, marsh, meadows and reedbeds of importance both for their biodiversity value and visual quality;
- The informal ramshackle character of buildings at Southwold harbour;
- Remote, isolated character and wide open skies.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

J3.9 Key visual sensitivities are the extensive long distance vistas across the flat estuarine landscape, punctuated by masts, water towers and church towers. These vistas would be vulnerable to any form of large scale development. The views to the subtle ridges which rise at the edge of the marshes are also sensitive to change on the ridge tops which form a low skyline enclosing the estuary.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

J3.10 This is a landscape with a strong character and generally in good condition. It's high landscape value is recognised by designation as part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. It also includes area nationally important for biodiversity (SSSI), and the built character of Southwold Harbour has Conservation Area status.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Creation of a new cut of the River Blyth to the sea south of Southwold in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and creation of harbour;
- Movement of the river channels across the estuary;
- 18<sup>th</sup> century and later Enclosure and drainage of the marshes for grazing;
- Decline in commercial use and navigation and increasing recreational use.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

J3.11 Climate change and the associated rising sea levels, in addition to salt water ingress is a key future challenge for this area. There is currently no Shoreline Management Plan, although no active intervention is the likely option.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- J3.12 **The primary strategic objective for the character area is to conserve the open expanse of estuarine landscape, with its long views and open skies and strong sense of remoteness and isolation. It is recognised that in the light of climate change that the mosaic of wetland habitats including grazing marsh, reedbeds and wetland meadow will change.**

### ***Landscape Management***

- J3.13 Principal landscape management objectives relate to understanding the effects of sea level ingress on the existing habitats and creation of appropriate responses for example by extending and enhancing the network of wetland habitats inland along the tributaries of the Blyth, although it is recognised that the creation of extensive stands of reedbed will not be feasible in these confined valley locations.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- J3.14 Development considerations should relate primarily to maintaining the remote, isolated character, and absence of development. The ad hoc ramshackle character of the harbour should be conserved.

## K: SANDLINGS

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- K The boundaries of the *Sandlings* landscape type are defined by Crag – sand geology and the extent of acid heathland vegetation types and associations, including relict heaths, pioneer birch woodland and gorse scrub. Scots pine hedgerows, planted to stabilise the sandy soils as heathlands were enclosed for agriculture are a characteristic skyline feature, as are blocks of mixed and coniferous plantation woodlands. One local character area is represented within this landscape type.

### Key Characteristics

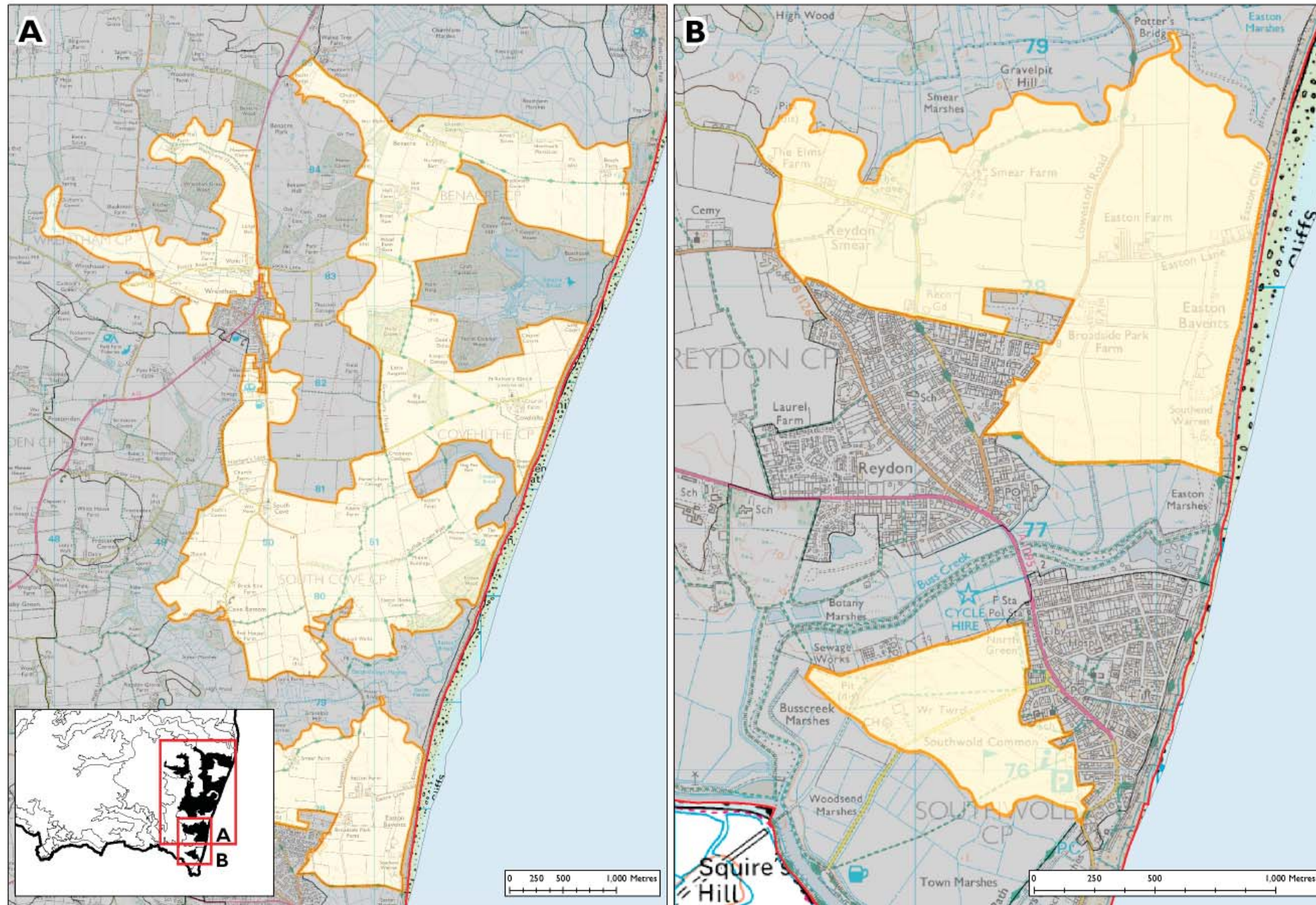
- Crag – sand bedrock geology is overlain by relatively sparsely deposited drift materials including sands of Corton Formation and isolated areas of Lowestoft tills.
- Landform variation is subtle, with topography ranging from 5m AOD to 15m AOD;
- Deep, well drained and often acid, sandy soils create landscapes defined by mixed farmland, small areas of heathland, gorse scrub and birch pioneer woodland, in addition to scots pine lines and isolated blocks of coniferous plantation;
- Agriculture, outdoor pig rearing and associated huts are often apparent;
- Field pattern is geometric and often of medium to large scale, with fields defined by mixed Enclosure hedgerows. Gorse and bracken are often prevalent, as are wide grassy banks and verges to roadside hedgerows;



- Views are often framed by the density of field boundary vegetation, with mature scots pine lines forming prominent skyline elements;
- Coastal influence is limited by field boundary vegetation although the sea and associated small scale coastal Broads are visible from areas of higher ground;
- A varied, mosaic quality, with the heathlands and pioneer scrub contrasting with areas of pig farming and plantation blocks. Regenerating heathland creates a wild character at points.
- A tranquil, sparsely settled landscape, with settlement confined to nucleated villages and occasional small hamlets.

<b>Landscape Type K: Sandlings</b>	
<b>Character Area</b>	
<b>KI</b>	<b>North Suffolk Sandlings</b>





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# KI: NORTH SUFFOLK SANDLINGS

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## Location and Boundaries

KI.1 *North Suffolk Sandlings* is located in the eastern part of Waveney District, forming a low lying coastal backdrop of remnant acid heathland and wooded farmland defined by the extent of sand and gravel drift deposits. The character area considers three small, discrete areas of similar character lying to the north of *Pottersbridge Marshes* and punctuated by a number of coastal broads. The eastern half of the character area lies within the Suffolk Coast AONB, which identifies the area as lying within the *Sandlings with agriculture* landscape type. A low sandy outcrop on which Southwold Common is sited forms part of the area.

## Key Characteristics

- A Crag – Sand bedrock geology is overlain by relatively sparsely deposited drift materials including sands of Corton Formation to the central part of the area and isolated areas of Lowestoft tills.
- A landscape of subtle landform variation, with topography ranging from 5m AOD at the crest of the coastal cliffs in the east to 15m AOD north of Benacre Broad;
- Deep, well drained and often acid, sandy soils create a landscape defined by mixed farmland, heathland, gorse scrub and birch pioneer woodland, in addition to scots pine lines and isolated blocks of coniferous plantation;
- Primary land use is that of agriculture, with outdoor pig rearing and associated huts often apparent;
- Field pattern is geometric and often of medium to large scale, with fields defined by mixed Enclosure hedgerows. Gorse and bracken are often prevalent, as are wide grassy banks and verges to roadside hedgerows;
- Views are often framed by the density of the field boundary vegetation, with mature scots pine lines forming prominent skyline elements;
- A dynamic landscape in light of the changing coastline although coastal influence is limited by field boundary vegetation although the sea and associated small scale coastal Broad are visible from higher ground within the area e.g. at Covehithe;
- Principal elements of the cultural landscape include remaining areas of heathland and the very large ruined church of St Andrew at Covehithe, the tower of which is prominent within the landscape;
- A landscape of varied, mosaic quality, with the heathlands and pioneer scrub contrasting with areas of pig farming and plantation blocks. Regenerating heathland creates a wild character at points.

- A tranquil, sparsely settled landscape, with settlement confined to the nucleated village of Wrentham, and the hamlet of Covehithe, a remnant of a formerly busy coastal port;
- Recreational access to the area is facilitated by a network of way marked routes and rights of way.

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

### Physical/Natural

- K1.2 Sparsely deposited drift materials such as sands of Corton formation and isolated areas of Lowestoft Tills overlay the Crag – sand bedrock geology. This is a landscape of low relief and subtle landform variation. The landscape is cut by series of low, broad estuaries and coastal lagoons such as the Covehithe and Benacre Broads.
- K1.3 Deep, well drained acid, sandy soils create a landscape often defined by remnant heathland and associated vegetation such as regenerating birch and gorse scrub on former heathland sites, in addition to dense, bracken filled hedgerows with grassy roadside banks, and twisted Scots Pine tree lines (windbreaks) which mark field boundaries at points. Mixed farmland includes outdoor pig rearing which is prevalent across the area, with expanses of muddy fields and huts. Landscape structure is provided by woodland blocks including coniferous plantation, by the pine lines and by an Enclosure pattern of mixed hedgerows, which define a rectilinear field pattern of often medium to large scale.
- K1.4 No data is given for the area in the Ecological Network Mapping Project although much of the area is identified as an opportunity zone for new heathland creation within the Heathland Opportunity Mapping Project.

### Historic Character

- K1.5 A number of historic processes with landscape expression are identified in the Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), notably 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure on the site of formerly open common and heathland across much of the central part of the area and extending to the coastal clifftops to the east. Areas of ancient woodland are also identified at Holly Grove (now partly coniferous plantation) and the Ausgates, in addition to Easton Wood.
- K1.6 Hodkinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk identifies large tracts of commonland at Covehithe and South Cove, although these have largely been lost to later Parliamentary Enclosure. The very large church of St Andrew at Covehithe (ruined by Cromwellian soldiers in the 1640s) is a prominent feature on the map, which remains today. Also shown on the map is the road to the lost village of Easton, which fell in the sea in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, and which is perpetuated in modern Easton Lane.
- K1.7 Principal extant elements of the cultural landscape include the gaunt shell of the Perpendicular church of St Andrew at Covehithe, which is almost the only relic of a formerly extensive and busy coastal port. Pevsner describes the ruins as a '*moving sight, with a commanding west tower and ... tall long majestic walls through which the wind blows from the sea*'.

## **Settlement and Built Character**

- K1.8 Southwold and Reydon form the south eastern edge of the character area. With the exception of the nucleated, plateau edge settlement of Wrentham, this is a remote, sparsely settled rural landscape, with only a network of minor rural roads and small hamlets such as Covehithe and Easton Bavents. Traditional vernacular materials such as red brick and clay pantile are evident at Wrentham, which is centred on the junction of five roads. Red brick and thatch are a feature of the minor hamlet of Covehithe, with thatch forming a common historic element of the built fabric e.g. at the church of South Cove.
- K1.9 To the northern edge of Reydon an intrusive settlement edge is apparent at points with 1970s residential development and corrugated industrial sheds visible. Large farm buildings are also prominent at Easton Lane, near Easton Bavents.

## **Perceptual/Visual**

- K1.10 This is a landscape of subtly varied, often transitional character, with the low coastal cliffs and exposed aspect at Easton Bavents contrasting markedly with the more intimate spatial scale created by the network of pine lines and scrubby bracken hedgerows further inland. Elements such as the pine lines and areas of regenerating birch and gorse impart a 'heathy' character, as does the sandy common at Southwold. Blocks of broadleaf and mixed woodland create further spatial and textural variation, as do the estuarine marshlands and coastal broads which frequently cut the landscape to the east, creating significant textural variety and interest.
- K1.11 Due to the presence of structural vegetation and the localised landform variation created by the estuarine valleys which cross the landscape, visual character is often contained, with views frequently framed by elements such as pine lines, which create a strong visual backdrop to low lying coastal elements such as the Covehithe and Benacre Broad.
- K1.12 A sparsely settled landscape of tranquil character, with dark night skies and with few lit settlement edges.

## **EVALUATION**

- K1.13 The following are judged to be the key sensitivities or positive features which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

### **Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities**

- Area of remnant sandy/acid heathland, which impart a sense of the historic landscape character and which are significant for biodiversity;
- Twisted, contorted Scots Pine lines which create an interesting backdrop/skyline feature and a strong sense of place;
- Mixed bracken dominated hedgerows which impart a sense of the 'Sandlings' character;



- The common at Southwold which is important as a setting for the settlement;
- Areas of ancient woodland which create localised containment and habitat interest;
- The exposed windswept coastal interface and the low Crag coastal cliffs which are of international geological importance;
- Elements of the historic landscape such as the ruinous church of St Andrews at Covehithe, which provides a prominent focus within the landscape.

### **Inherent Visual Sensitivities**

KI.14 Key visual sensitivities are judged to be the skylines created by Scots Pine lines and the localised visual containment afforded by blocks of ancient woodland. Views to the ruins of St Andrew's Church and tower and glimpsed views to coastal elements such as the saline broads at Covehithe and Benacre are other key visual sensitivities.

### **Landscape Condition and Quality/Current State of the Landscape**

KI.15 This is a functional, managed agricultural landscape which displays a notable diversity of landcover and landscape elements. Whilst outdoor pig rearing and twentieth century agricultural practices have changed the character of the landscape at points, the over riding impression is that of a 'Sandling' landscape of strong visual and ecological character.

### **Landscape Change**

#### ***Past Change***

- Coastal erosion, resulting in the loss of both the settlements of Easton and the former coastal port town of Covehithe;
- Planting of scots pine windbreak hedgerows/lines, to stabilise the sandy soils for agriculture;
- Loss of commons and heathland to Parliamentary Enclosure;
- Regeneration of areas of unmanaged heathland to woodland and scrub;
- Use of farmlands for outdoor pig rearing, together with associated huts;
- Loss of woodlands to agricultural intensification;
- Significant settlement expansion to the north west of Southwold, at Reydon.

#### ***Potential Future Change***

KI.16 Potential future change will arise through continued coastal erosion, in addition to salt water leaching in light of rising sea levels. The Shoreline Management Plan for the coast north of Lowestoft has adopted an approach to coastal management based

on minimal intervention and this is likely to be the case for the coast south of Lowestoft when the Management Plan for this area is produced.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- KI.17 Key strategic objectives for this area are to conserve and enhance the sparsely settled, rural character and areas of heathland where a remote and wild ‘Sandlings’ character persists. Landscape elements such as pine lines and blocks of plantation which make a strong contribution to sense of place should be conserved. It is however recognised that this landscape is vulnerable to the implications of coastal erosion and rising sea levels.**
- KI.18 Where views are available to the sea and the network of coastal Broads, these should be maintained.**

### ***Landscape Management***

- KI.19** Conserve and enhance remaining areas of acid heathland through selective scrub management/thinning and through reinforcing field boundary linkages between sites (gorse hedgerows). Conserve and enhance veteran Scots Pine tree lines through active management to ensure their longevity as a landscape feature. Instigate hedgerow planting and enhancement/reinforcement in areas where boundaries have become eroded due to twentieth century agricultural practice. Explore opportunities for creation of new heathland and linkages between existing heathland sites to replace areas lost to changing coastlines/erosion.

### ***Considerations in relation to development***

- KI.20** Development considerations should relate to enhancing the edges of the settlements in relation to the landscape e.g. at Reydon, using native planting and reinforcing linkages to the hedgerow network to integrate edges. The sparsely settled and remote quality of the landscape, together with the dark night skies, should be maintained, as should views to important skyline elements such as pine lines and the ruined church of St Andrews at Covehithe. The tightly contained form of settlements fringing the area such as Reydon and Southwold, should be conserved, as should features such as commons which contribute to their landscape setting.



**APPENDIX I**  
**Field Survey Form**



# GT YARMOUTH/WAVENEY LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT: LANDSCAPE TYPE FIELD SURVEY SHEET

Photograph Nos: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Direction of view: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 OS Grid Reference: \_\_\_\_\_ Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAFT LANDSCAPE TYPE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAFT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Keywords describing the landscape:**

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**Location and Boundaries**

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## Physical Features

### LAND

<input type="checkbox"/> Flat	<input type="checkbox"/> Cliff/precipice	<input type="checkbox"/> Headland	<input type="checkbox"/> Broad valley
<input type="checkbox"/> Rolling	<input type="checkbox"/> Rock outcrops	<input type="checkbox"/> Escarpment	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrow valley
<input type="checkbox"/> Undulating	<input type="checkbox"/> Plain	<input type="checkbox"/> Ridge	<input type="checkbox"/> Deep gorge
<input type="checkbox"/> Steep slopes	<input type="checkbox"/> Plateau	<input type="checkbox"/> Knoll	<input type="checkbox"/> Gully
<input type="checkbox"/> Gentle slopes	<input type="checkbox"/> Promontory	<input type="checkbox"/> Basin	

### WATER

<input type="checkbox"/> River (size.....)	<input type="checkbox"/> Streams	<input type="checkbox"/> Drainage channels	<input type="checkbox"/> Pond
<input type="checkbox"/> River Meanders	<input type="checkbox"/> Broads	<input type="checkbox"/> Flooded gravel pits	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ditches & Dykes	<input type="checkbox"/> Tributaries	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake	



# Land Cover

## Land Use

<input type="checkbox"/>	Farmland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forestry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure/Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mineral Working	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

## Vegetation Cover

<input type="checkbox"/>	Arable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Copses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marsh
<input type="checkbox"/>	Perm. pasture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avenues	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scattered Trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bog
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pasture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conif woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orchards	<input type="checkbox"/>	Peat bog
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ley/improved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decid. woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hedgerow trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rough grazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hedgerows	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wet Meadow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small farm woods	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scrub/bracken	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amenity grassland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carr Woodland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heath/ Moor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Common	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shelterbelts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wetland/Aquatics	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Landscape Elements/Features Subtle Evident Conspicuous

<input type="checkbox"/>	Motorway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farm buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fortifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nucleated settlem.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dual Carriageway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manor/Parkland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Isolated Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linear settlement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Road	<input type="checkbox"/>	Landmark Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dispersed settlem.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Lanes Track	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hill forts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial workings
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunken Lane	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lighthouse/beacon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Round towered churches
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bridleway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wind turbines	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moats	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sea Wall/Flood Defenses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Footpath	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mast/poles	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tumuli	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Railway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Church	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ridge and furrow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

## Field Patterns

<input type="checkbox"/>	Banks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fence - rural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geometric	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ditches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fence – ‘urban’	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sinuous	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium
<input type="checkbox"/>	Walls - rural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hedge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irregular	<input type="checkbox"/>	Large
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wall – ‘urban’	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hedgerow trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

## Perception

VIEWS	distant	framed	intermittent	panoramic	corridor
SCALE	intimate	small	medium	large	
ENCLOSURE	confined	enclosed	semi-enclosed	open	exposed
VARIETY	complex	varied	simple	uniform	
TEXTURE	smooth	textured	rough	very rough	
COLOUR	monochrome	muted	colourful	garish	
MOVEMENT	remote	vacant	peaceful	active	
UNITY	unified	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic	
NATURALNES	undisturbed	restrained	tamed	disturbed	

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## Coastal Influence/Character (effect of change in light, type, tides etc)

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## Settlement within the landscape

Size \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pattern \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Density \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Age, style and materials\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the landscape\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Settlement edge character\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## EVALUATION

### POSITIVE LANDSCAPE FEATURES OF SIGNIFICANCE

Feature	Why it is significant

**INHERENT LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY** (Consider: Positive features of key significance and sensitivity of the area as a whole, i.e. function & relationship to other areas and sense of place/identity)

#### Key Landscape Character Sensitivities

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Key Visual Sensitivities

\_\_\_\_\_

**STRENGTH OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER** (Consider: Representativeness in relation to landscape type & other key characteristics (positive/negative) that influence sense of place/identity).

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**CONDITION OF THE LANDSCAPE/CURRENT STATE OF THE LANDSCAPE** (Consider the functional, visual and ecological perspectives).

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**KEY ISSUES/VISIBLE FORCES FOR CHANGE**

**Past**

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**Present and future**

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**DETRACTING FEATURES**

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Pylons	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fence – ‘urban’	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wind Turbines
<input type="checkbox"/>	Road signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paddocks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Degraded hedgerow	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncharacteristic building materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wall – ‘urban’	<input type="checkbox"/>	Large scale industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

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**APPENDIX 2**  
**Stakeholder Consultation Report**





**WAVENEY DISTRICT LCA –  
STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP  
REPORT**

**Prepared for Waveney District  
by  
Land Use Consultants**

**January 2008**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

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- I.1. This short report sets out a summary of the consultation responses provided at the Stakeholder Workshop held to validate the draft Landscape Character Assessment of the District which is being undertaken by Land Use Consultants (LUC) on behalf of Waveney District Council (WDC). The workshop was held on the evening of 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 at the Public Hall, Beccles.

## PARTICIPANTS

- I.2. The stakeholder group was split into 2 smaller groups, considering broadly the eastern and western parts of the District, in addition to areas in which participants had a specific interest/particular knowledge. Attendees are set out in Table I below.

**Table I: Workshop attendees**

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Sapphire Franks	Waveney District Council
Paddy Flegg	Ward Councillor
David Ritchie	Ward Councillor
Wendy Mawer	Ward Councillor
Jasmine Rising	The Bungay Society
Didy Ward	The Bungay Society/Bungay Town Council
Peter Holborn	Suffolk County Council
Dr Mike Coleman	Suffolk Preservation Society
Fiona McKeown	Landscape Advisor – Waveney District Council
Mr Martin	Kessingland Parish Council
Trevor Knights	Worlingham Parish Council
John Sharpe	Beccles Society
Bob Arms	Beccles Society

## Workshop approach

- I.3. In order to validate the characterisation, a number of questions were considered for each character by the participants, with evidence recorded under the following headings:



### ***Character Area Name***

Is this correct/does it have local resonance?

### ***Character area boundaries***

Does the area make sense as a discrete area of coherent character?

Should any changes be made?

### ***Key Characteristics***

Do these sum up the character of the area, in terms of physical, cultural and aesthetic attributes?

Should any be changed/added?

### ***What is special about this landscape?***

This considered historic and ecological parameters, in addition to experiential aspects such as the way in which participants use/value that landscape.

### ***Landscape change***

Participants were asked to consider past, present and potential future change, noting both positive and negative change, as well as any other pressures/issues/initiatives they were aware of.

### ***Landscape Strategy***

Participants were asked to comment on the landscape strategy objectives for the areas, noting whether they were correct or whether anything else should be added/changed.

- I.4. The remainder of this report sets out the participants responses to the character area areas under these headings, for the two groups 1 and 2.
- I.5. The comments are set out in tabulated format for each character area, with LUC's response set out in the right hand column.

## 2. GROUP I

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- 2.1. Participants in this group concentrated on the coastal edge of the district where particular concerns were raised about climate change, sea level inundation and associated landscape change.
- 2.2. The comments on the individual character areas are set out in tables 2.1 to 2.4 below. General comments are listed as bullets at the end of the section.

**Table 2.1: Area F1: Lowestoft and Kessingland Coast**

Subject/issue	Stakeholder Comments	LUC Response
<b>Character Area Name</b>	Group considered this was Kessingland and not Lowestoft.	The Character Area does extend up to the southern edge of Lowestoft suggest change name to Lowestoft to Kessingland Coastal Cliffs or Pakefield to Kessingland Coastal Cliffs.
<b>Boundaries</b>	OK as present but firm point made that this is a dynamic coastline and in this respect fixed boundaries or lines on maps are not correct. Breach of the cliff will result in the loss of the entire area. <b>Note this is not a possible future change but flooding is already occurring and the cliff will be lost.</b>	Add section on dynamic nature of coast and liable to change. Philosophical question of how LCA should deal with future change, when mapping the present landscape.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	Dynamic	Agree
	Substantial buildings along the coast – chalets and campsites	Agree

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>What is special about the landscape?</b>	Cliffs fulfil very important role in protecting inland areas from flooding. Note that if the cliff is breached the A12 will be lost. The A12 is the principal route to this part of EA and vital to the economy.	LUC to review EA information for this area of soft cliffs.
<b>Landscape Change</b>	<b>Past</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chalet development</li> </ul>	
	<b>Present</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal flooding</li> </ul>	
	<b>Future</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal ingress</li> </ul>	
<b>Landscape Strategy</b>	LUC to revise in relation to coastal flooding and review EA information.	Agree

**Table 2.2: Area H6 and H7: Blyth and Wang Tributary Farmland**

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>Character Area Name</b>	Should this be one character area?	LUC to review maps and names.
<b>Boundaries</b>	Important to note that boundaries will change substantially as a result of future inundation. River will be pushed further up the valleys. The 'H' areas will become narrower as a result.	LUC to check if any modelling available of inundation. LUC to add note on dynamic nature of boundaries.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	Variable form more enclosed towards the valley floor and	Agree

Subject/issue	Stakeholder Comments	LUC Response
	towards the valley floor and more exposed on the plateau edge.	
<b>What is special about the landscape?</b>	Very sensitive area – liable to change as a result of flooding.	Agree
	Noted that particular habitats are associated with the sea clay along the coastal edge resulting in notable habitats in the estuaries – these habitats can not be re created upstream.	LUC to review geological maps and extent of sea clay (note that this comment may relate to different character area i.e. relationship of H7 with J3)
<b>Landscape Change</b>	<b>Past</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of tributary river habitats with agricultural intensification</li> </ul>	Agree
	<b>Present</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None noted</li> </ul>	

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
	<p><b>Future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal ingress</li> <li>• Development pressures notably around Halesworth in H6. Halesworth needs to take growth but very constrained – in relation to the valley and flooding. Further development of the town upslope is poor in landscape terms resulting in a very exposed edge.</li> </ul>	Agree - also need to relate to other towns in tributary valley landscapes.
<b>Landscape Strategy</b>	LUC to revise in relation to coastal flooding and review EA information. Need to also consider development and landscape constraints.	Agree

**Table 2.3: Area K1: North Suffolk Sandlings**

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>Character Area Name</b>		
<b>Boundaries</b>	<p>This area will become the eroding coastal cliff once sea water breaches.</p> <p>Southwold will become an island.</p>	LUC to check if any modelling available of inundation. LUC to add note on dynamic nature of boundaries.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	Variable form more enclosed towards the valley floor and more exposed on the plateau edge.	Agree

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>What is special about the landscape?</b>	Unique sandy coastal area.	Agree
<b>Landscape Change</b>	<b>Past</b>	
	•	
	<b>Present</b>	
	•	
	<b>Future</b>	
	• Coastal ingress and sea level rise	Agree - must be reflected more strongly
<b>Landscape Strategy</b>	Strategy does not make sense in light of coastal flooding.	Agree - LUC to make strategy more targeted.

The group also made some useful general comments on the Waveney District landscape as a whole. These are summarised below:

### **Landscape Change**

- Stagheaded oaks are a key feature and being lost as a result of drying out of the clays. There is very limited new planting.
- Landscape effect of new crops such as hemp grown for fibres. This is a tall crop and will have a landscape effect. In recent years oil seed rape has diminished – not known what future new crops will be planted.
- Development pressures particularly associated with valley towns up onto more open plateau areas where settlement edges are highly visible plus also effect on drainage. Can LCA provide general guidance on development spread? e.g. need to protect plateau edge from development ‘up’ from Beccles (e.g. in I2).
- There are also a number of key gaps between developed areas, for example Beccles – Beccles Common – Worlingham. These should be protected through the LCA, notably in the light of proposals to drop ‘gap’ policies.
- Also need to protect the key undeveloped coastal gaps.



- Some areas e.g. H4 and B1 need to be co-ordinated with the Broads LCA.

### **Special Values**

- Waveney is a very diverse and variable landscape
- An area of very rural landscape with high levels of tranquillity
- Importance of long views on elevated plateau areas (Type I) but note that I3 is lower (and this should be reflected in character area description).
- Need to retain as a living landscape not preserve e.g. second homes
- Need community employment to keep a thriving landscape and infrastructure

### **Character Area Names and Boundaries**

H5 –Sconch Beck is not locally known could be renamed The Elmhams Valley

I1– Elmhams Plateau – This area is locally known as The Saints and is characterised by large fields. The boundary of this area should extend further to the east towards the A12. The boundary should aim to keep all the Elmhams together. Note difference in settlement pattern between I1 clustered and I2 much sparser settlement

I4 – Chetsnut’s Farm – suggest Gisleham as a better name

B1 – needs to cover a small area omitted on the north side of Beccles town edge (currently not shown as grey)

### 3. GROUP 2

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3.1. Participants in this group considered the following draft character areas:

- B1: *Waveney Valley*
- F2: *Southwold Coast*
- H4: *Upper Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland*
- I1: *Elmhams Plateau*

3.2. The comments on the individual character areas are set out in tables 3.1 to 3.4 below.

**Table 3.1: Area B1: Waveney Valley**

Subject/issue	Stakeholder Comments	LUC Response
<b>Character Area Name</b>	OK	-
<b>Boundaries</b>	Suggest moving southern boundary further up to include woodlands to crest/adjacent to I1 area.	LUC to check
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	KC's 3 and 4: Neatly encapsulate marshland character to west of Bungay.	Agree
	KC's 5 and 6: A well wooded landscape with significant visual containment.	Agree
	Note Snowdrop carpeted woodland within the valley to the west of Bungay.	Agree
	Note gravel workings/mineral sites.	Agree
	Stakeholders felt the KC's to be good summary of area's character	
<b>What is special about the landscape?</b>	Woodlands	Agree

Subject/issue	Stakeholder Comments	LUC Response
<b>the landscape?</b>	A landscape of great variety and diversity (pasture, livestock and woodland, in addition to bird habitats).	Agree
	Wildlife/riparian habitat associated with the river.	Agree
	A relatively tranquil landscape, in spite of the presence of transport corridors such as the road and railway.	Agree, but check/confirm with CPRE Tranquillity Mapping.
	Emergent spring groundcover in woodlands provides micro landscape interest.	Agree cite in section on perceptual character.
<b>Landscape Change</b>	<b>Past</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gravel workings</li></ul>	Agreed
	<b>Present</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gravel workings near Worlingham Hall (and potentially in future)</li></ul>	Agreed
	<b>Future</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential development issues with land around Otter Trust</li><li>• Potential enhanced recreational access to river</li><li>• Potential Bungay bypass at Straw Fen?</li></ul>	WDC said that no enquiries have yet been made as to land at Otter Trust by developers
		LUC to check
LUC to check		
<b>Landscape Strategy</b>	Stakeholders felt that the strategy was broadly correct. Provide for low key recreational access to river. Support/maintain grazing, as landscape character is	Agree

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
	dependent on livestock farming which may be of concern in the longer term. Dependence on tourism cited.	

**Table 3.2: Area F2: Southwold Coast**

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>Character Area Name</b>	OK	-
<b>Boundaries</b>	Broadly correct, although the elevated sand on which Southwold Common is located may be better as part of a separate type/area	LUC to investigate.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	KC5: Both Sizewell A and B are visible from this area.	Agree
	Refer to salt loving plants such as tree lupins and sea kales on beaches.	Agree
<b>What is special about the landscape?</b>	Southwold Lighthouse is distinctive and a key point of reference.	Agree
	Antiquated town of Southwold – ‘not your typical seaside resort’.	Agree
	Southwold Pier is a special feature.	Agree
	The Harbour is a working harbour, rather than a marina.	Agree
	The walk along the Blyth Estuary and associated views back to Southwold.	Agree
	Low cliffs are very interesting geologically.	Agree – LUC to check/make reference to.

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>Landscape Change</b>	<b>Past</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal erosion</li> </ul>	Agreed
	<b>Present</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal erosion</li> <li>• Localised ‘coastal defences’ – landfill/dumping</li> <li>• Second home owners in Southwold</li> </ul>	Agree
		Agree
	<b>Future</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal erosion and implications of Shoreline Management Plan</li> </ul>	Reference to second home owners is too subjective - omit
		LUC to check
<b>Landscape Strategy</b>	The group agreed that the wild, elemental coastal character should be enhanced. Conserve Southwold Harbour as a working harbour. The potential approach to coastal retreat could fundamentally alter the character of the area (Southwold Harbour will be lost if the estuary is not protected).	Agree – can refer to coastal retreat approaches and implications for strategy, although the extent to which we can address issues to do with managed retreat within this study is limited.

**Table 3.3: Area H4: Upper Waveney Tributary Valley Farmland**

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>Character Area Name</b>	<p>Potential conflict with the true Upper Waveney in adjacent authorities.</p> <p>Is the name ‘Mettingham’ more appropriate?</p>	Agree that we should use an alternative name but it should be one which relates to the river the tributaries drain into.

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>Boundaries</b>	Agreement on the extent of the character area, defined by tributary watercourses – ‘feels of a piece’.	-
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	KC5: Semi sunken roads, hedgerows and hedgerow oaks conspicuous features.	Agree
	Note that the landscape is prone to flooding.	Agree
	Thatched roof churches distinctive.	Agree. LUC to check references in Pevsner.
	KC11: The character area does have a remote quality.	Agree
	Importance for flora e.g. Bee Orchids, and fauna – bird species	Agree
<b>What is special about the landscape?</b>	Ancient/historic feel imparted by Enclosure landscape fabric.	Agree
	Sparsely populated	Agree
	Presence of spiritual retreats	
	Ley lines	
<b>Landscape Change</b>	<b>Past</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement expansion pressures to valley sides</li> </ul>	Agree
	<b>Present</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement expansion pressures to valley sides</li> <li>• Apartment developments in historic buildings e.g. Shipmeadow Workhouse</li> </ul>	Agree



<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
	<p><b>Future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement expansion pressures to valley sides</li> <li>• Potential coalescence between Bungay and Beccles – slopes to valley vulnerable</li> </ul>	Agree
<b>Landscape Strategy</b>	Suggest using the word 'restore' rather than 'enhance' watercourses, or perhaps make reference to enhancing their fabric instead i.e. marginal vegetation/wetland edge.	Agree

**Table 3.4: Area II: Elmhams Plateau**

<b>Subject/issue</b>	<b>Stakeholder Comments</b>	<b>LUC Response</b>
<b>Character Area Name</b>	Should this be called Saints – West, as a reference to the settlements (The Saints)?	Agree
<b>Boundaries</b>	Expand Waveney Valley to include woodlands to valley side; Should Halesworth Road form the subdivision with I2?	LUC to investigate.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	KCs6 and 10 encapsulate sparsely settled and remote landscape well, in addition to the small scale of some landscape elements.	Agree
	Little evidence of built development.	Agree
	Flint Churches distinctive.	LUC to check Pevsner.
	KCI I: Extensive ROW network noted.	Agree
	A good recognisable description.	

Subject/issue	Stakeholder Comments	LUC Response
	Refer to greens/commons/tyes, also ponds and moated sites.	LUC to check map and amend as appropriate.
	Relatively uncluttered, undisturbed skylines.	Agree
<b>What is special about the landscape?</b>	Remote, unpopulated quality.	Agree
	‘Room to breathe’, ‘unspoilt’.	Agree, although need to be less subjective.
	Disorientating	Make reference to this quality in the report.
	Classic, undisturbed rural Suffolk landscape – ‘not too tidy’.	Agree
	Churches valuable, as are other cultural sites such as Flixton Abbey and moated sites (South Elmham Hall and Minster on boundary/outside area).	Agree
	General cultural interest of listed buildings/vernacular farm buildings.	Agree, although not a specific landscape consideration – can pick up in section on cultural/vernacular.
	Long views across and to Waveney Valley, and East Anglian skies/sense of space.	Agree
	Opportunities for walking/cycling.	Agree
<b>Landscape Change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of hedgerows and mixed farming to intensive arable in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> Century</li> <li>• ‘Wall to wall arable cropping’</li> </ul>	Agree

Subject/issue	Stakeholder Comments	LUC Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barn conversions</li> <li>• Farm diversification – holiday chalets</li> </ul>	Agree
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewable energy – biofuel cropping?</li> <li>• Wind energy?</li> <li>• Further housing considered unlikely</li> </ul>	LUC to check. WDC consider further housing unlikely.
<b>Landscape Strategy</b>	Broad agreement on strategy. Detail should focus on potential for re instatement if commons/greens/tyes where lost (on their former sites). Also restoration of ploughed out footpaths.	Agree, subject to agri environment schemes.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Glossary**



## Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
Ancient woodland	Woods that are believed to have been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD.
Built Form	The characteristic nature of built development.
Broads	Water bodies which are the remnants of the medieval peat extraction industry, causing land below sea level to flood after working/management has ceased.
Characteristic	A distinctive element of the landscape that contributes to landscape character for instance a particular hedgerow pattern or sense of tranquillity.
Claustral Buildings	Within a monastery, buildings relating to the cloisters/cloister garth.
Co-axial field pattern	A parallel arrangement of field boundary hedgerows, often creating a rectilinear field boundary pattern.
Conserve	Strategy where the emphasis is conservation of existing character and of particular features that contribute to this character.
Coppice	A traditional form of woodland management where trees are cut regularly on a cycle to promote growth from their bases.
Covert	Woodlands grown/managed for sporting purposes i.e. the hunting of game birds (to 'provide cover').
Decoy	A pond to attract ducks for food within medieval and later landed estates.
Diamicton	Massive, poorly sorted drift geological deposit material.
Enclosure	The placing in private hands of land to which there was previously common rights.
Enhance	Strategy where the emphasis is on restoring elements that have been lost or declined and on enhancing character. This may include improvements to landscape management practices and the introduction of positive new elements or features.



Term	Definition
Fen	Fens are peatlands. Two main types of fen occur: Topogenous fens where water movement in the peat or soil is generally vertical (e.g. basin fens and floodplain fens) and Soligenous fens where water movements are lateral (e.g. mires associated with springs, rills and flushes and valley mires). They are dynamic semi-natural systems requiring appropriate management in order to maintain the open fen communities and associated species richness.
Geodiversity	The variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils along with the natural processes that shape the landscape, which are the subject of the emerging Geodiversity Action Plan Process.
Guidelines	Guidelines outline the actions required to ensure that distinctive character is maintained.
Ha Ha	A sunken/ditched boundary feature, often incorporating a low wall. Often part of designed landscapes in 17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> Centuries, it stems from earlier defensive origins and the name is said to derive from the exclamation of surprise when intruders stumbled upon its presence.
Landscape character	The distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape and how these are perceived. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.
Landscape character areas	Single unique areas that are the discrete geographical area of a particular landscape type.
Landscape character types	Distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historic land use and settlement pattern.
Meres	Lakes formed when ice sheets retreated, carving out hollows in the underlying bedrock, and filling with meltwater from the glaciers.

Term	Definition
Pollards, pollarding	A traditional form of woodland management, where trees are cut back to approximately 2-4 metres above ground level on a 15-20 year rotation and the growth harvested for fuel/building. Such a practice usually results in the creation of a massive bole and significantly prolongs the life of the tree.
Pingos	Water bodies created by the contraction of frozen pockets of ground water during the thaw following the last Ice Age.
Re-create	A strategy that provides the opportunity to create or accelerate change towards a new positive landscape character.
Restore	A strategy which focuses upon restoration or renewal of landscape features or characteristics that have been or are currently being lost or degraded, alongside active management of the remaining resource.
Sandlings	Sandy heathland with pine belts forming the hinterland to the Suffolk coastal landscape. Pig farming is often characteristic where agriculture has taken over.
Sensitivity	A judgement of how sensitive or vulnerable a landscape component is to change.
Sylvicultural systems	Traditional woodland management practices e.g. pollarding/coppicing.
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.
Slacks	Low depressions in duneland systems.
Tyes	Traditional name for a village green, in popular usage throughout much of the east of England, in particular Suffolk/Essex.
Vernacular architecture	Architecture which is indigenous to a specific place and adapted to both the environment and to the user's need. (The term 'vernacular' is derived from the Latin vernaculus, meaning 'native').