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Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

State of the AONB Report 2018

Prepared by LUC for Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
March 2019



Project Title: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB: State of the AONB Report 2018

Client: Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB team and Combined Joint Advisory Committee

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| | | | | | |



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Executive summary

This State of the AONB Report was commissioned by the Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) team and Combined Joint Advisory Committee to provide evidence on the current status of a number of indicators relating to the state of the protected landscape.

The purpose of the report is to provide a compilation of information from various data sources which can form a baseline against which to monitor future change, identify current and potential forces for change in the landscape, make informed recommendations for monitoring and management and form a robust evidence base to inform and underpin Management Plan Policies.

The three main stages of the work were as follows:

- Stage 1: Identify suitable indicators
- Stage 2: Data collection and collation
- Stage 3: Analysis and presentation of the data

The headline findings of the report include:

- There have been significant increases in tourism revenue within the AONB in recent years, with the value of tourism calculated at over £210 million in 2017.
- Changes to the agricultural landscape character of the AONB have been minor in recent years, although changes to agri-environment schemes following Brexit will be a key force for change in the future.
- Almost 29% of the AONB is internationally/nationally designated for its nature conservation importance.
- Coastal erosion is a key force for change in the landscape which is likely to impact on several of the indicators within this report including those relating to heritage, biodiversity and landscape.
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects including the proposed Sizewell C development are likely to have a significant impact on the landscape of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB.
- The on-going Glover Review may result in changes to how protected landscape bodies are funded and managed which could in turn impact on the management of the landscape.
- The population of the AONB is ageing, which may have implications for land management (e.g. retiring farmers) and the provision of services in the AONB.
- The majority of visitors to the AONB travel via private car.

The report also highlights gaps in monitoring data and provides recommendations with how these issues may be addressed over the Management Plan period. Key recommendations include:

- Monitor the amount of land managed as part of agri-environment schemes to analyse changes following Brexit.
- Collect detailed data on planning applications within the AONB, including approval rates and the type of planning application.
- Implement monitoring to assess the impact of NSIPs on the protected landscape.
- Monitor the condition of semi-natural habitats to provide evidence on the impact of forces for change such as increased levels of recreation activity.
- Gather more data on modes of transport to the AONB and introduce measures to increase accessibility of the protected landscape to deprived communities to further extend the health and wellbeing benefits the landscape can provide.

1 Introduction



1 Introduction

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB: A nationally important landscape

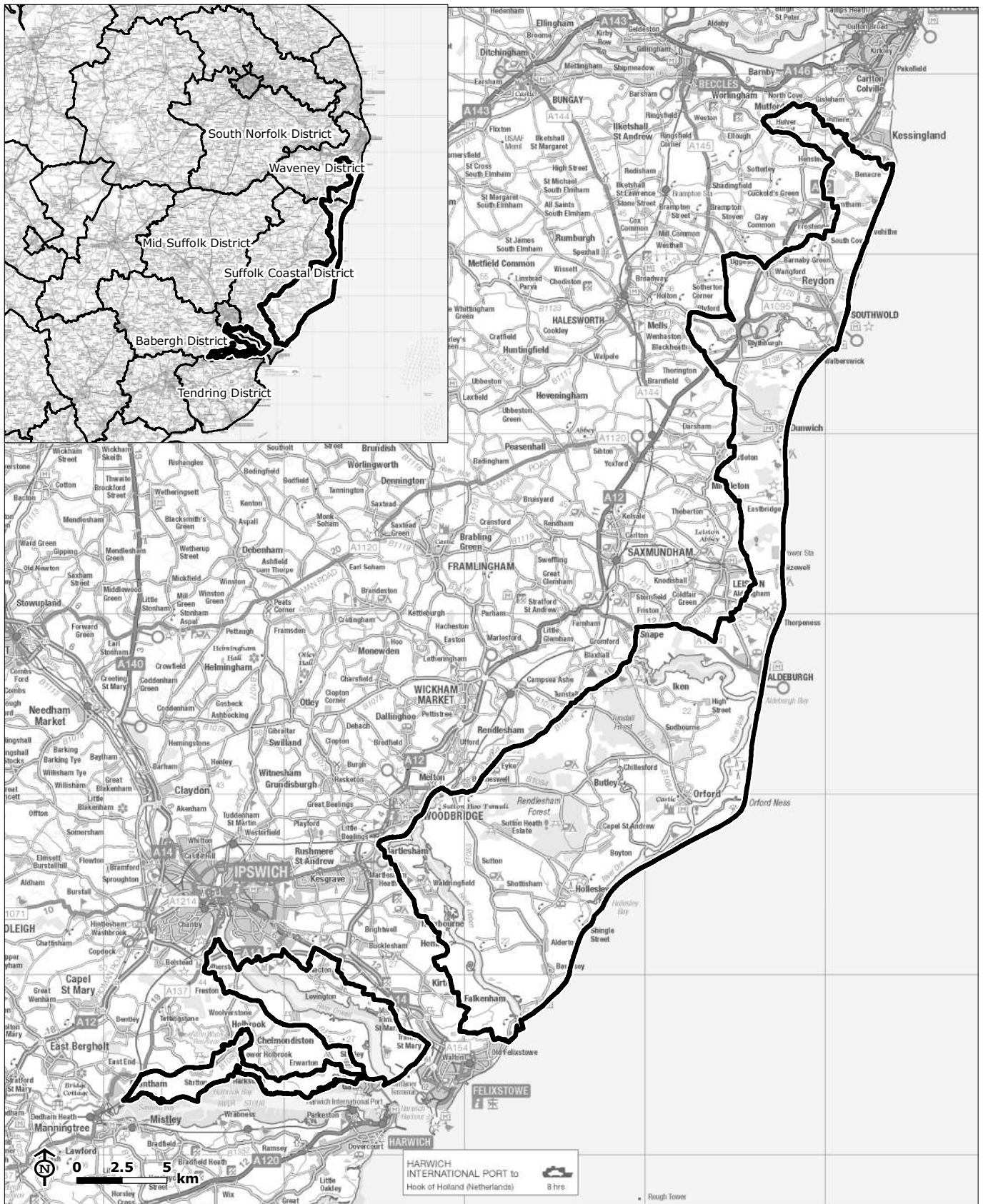
- 1.1 The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB was designated in 1970 and spans a 60 km stretch of some of the least developed coastline in south-eastern England. The largest section of the AONB follows the Suffolk coastline, stretching from Kessingland in the north to Shotley Peninsular (of the River Stour estuary) in the south. Although separated by Felixstowe and the A14, there are additional (non-connected) sections which follow the River Orwell and the northern banks of the River Stour. In total the AONB covers an area of 403 square kilometres¹.
- 1.2 This distinctive lowland landscape is mostly flat or gently rolling. Along the coast the landscape becomes more dramatic, with coastal configurations of cliffs, shingle spits and beaches. River walls are commonplace along the edge of estuaries to re-claim saltmarsh and mudflat habitat from the sea. The area contains a range of coastal, terrestrial and aquatic habitats with large swathes of the AONB designated for wildlife conservation. Large areas of the AONB are under conservation management by the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and National Trust. Where arable production occurs, it requires extensive management due to the underlying geology of the AONB and resulting poor quality and fast-draining soil. Settlement is sparse and comprises scattered villages, hamlets and coastal market towns. Roads are mostly rural lanes, although the A12 runs close to the western boundary of the AONB and crosses the designated area in several locations. Ipswich, Felixstowe and Lowestoft are the largest settlements adjacent to the AONB. Along the coast are several developments of significant size, including the Cobra Mist Transmitting Station and Sizewell A and B power stations.
- 1.3 Views within the AONB are often expansive due to the open character of the landscape and relatively flat topography. The coast is often characterised by sweeping views. The sparsely populated character of the area has preserved valued perceptual qualities such as the sense of space, remoteness and tranquillity. The AONB is popular for outdoor recreation and has provided inspiration for numerous artists.
- 1.4 A map and aerial photograph of the AONB are shown in **Figure 1.1** and **Figure 1.2**. The AONB is located in the county of Suffolk, and falls within the boundaries of Babergh Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council² local planning authorities (and a very small part of Ipswich District). Part of the proposed extension of the AONB will include Tendring District.

Purpose of the State of the AONB Report

- 1.5 The aim of the State of the AONB Report is to provide an important evidence baseline, comprised of information from all appropriate and available data sources. The report also provides recommendations for future monitoring, in order for the report to be updated in the future. By using a repeatable methodology and producing standardised monitoring data, future State of the AONB Reports will be able to identify and explore trends and changes within the AONB.
- 1.6 Information obtained from the State of the AONB report can also be used to inform the statutory AONB Management Plan, a document which is reviewed on a five-year basis. Management Plans provide the long term vision for the management framework of the AONB.

¹ Please note that at the time of writing this report, the AONB is subject to a boundary review to extend the boundary to the south and west. Further information can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suffolk-coast-and-heaths-area-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-boundary-variation>

² From 1st April 2019 Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District councils will merge to form the East Suffolk Local Authority.



 Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

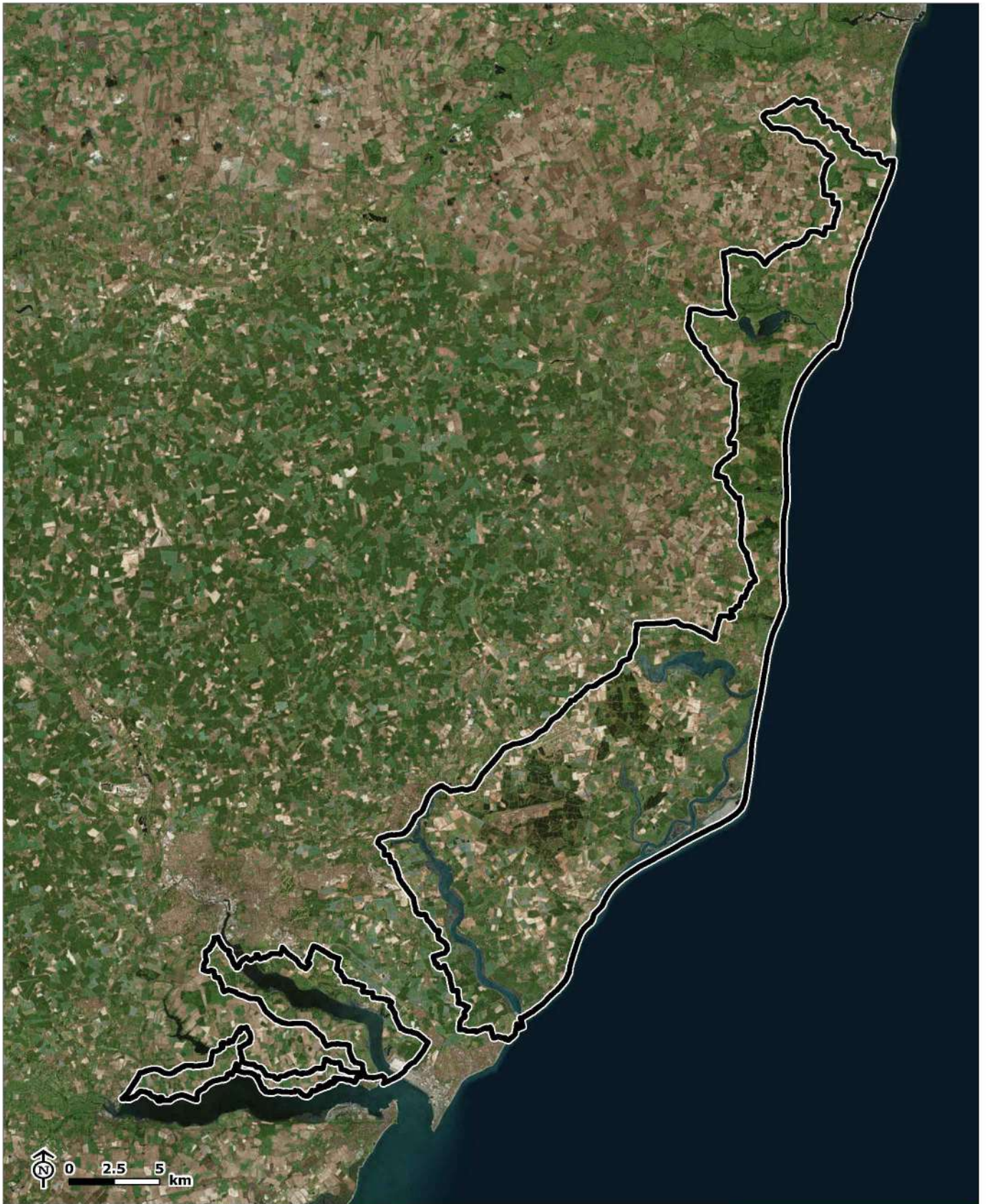
**Suffolk Coast & Heaths
State of the AONB
Report 2018**


**Figure 1.1: Location and
Extent of Suffolk Coast &
Heaths AONB**

Source: NE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000





 Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

**Suffolk Coast & Heaths
State of the AONB
Report 2018**

**Figure 1.2: Aerial Context
of Suffolk Coast & Heaths
AONB**

Source: NE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000



Structure of this report

1.7 This report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the methodology used to produce the report.
- **Chapter 3** sets out the indicators for the landscape theme, including the following sub-themes:
 - Landscape character context;
 - The coastline and seascapes;
 - Agricultural landscape character;
 - Woodland cover and management;
 - Settlement and planning; and
 - Perceptual qualities.
- **Chapter 4** sets out the indicators for the biodiversity and geodiversity theme, including the following sub-themes;
 - Biodiversity; and
 - Geodiversity.
- **Chapter 5** sets out the indicators for the historic environment theme.
- **Chapter 6** sets out the indicators for the socio-economic profile theme.
- **Chapter 7** sets out the indicators for the tourism and visitor economy theme.
- **Chapter 8** sets out the summary headlines from each chapter and also outlines the next steps for monitoring within the AONB.

2 Method



Photo by: Mike Page

2 Method

- 2.1 The methodology used to produce this State of the AONB report consisted of three main stages:

Stage 1: Identifying monitoring indicators

- 2.2 The initial stages of the State of the AONB Project involved reviewing availability of available, up-to-date datasets. This included looking at information from the Management Plan, National Character Area profiles, publications from Defra and Natural England³ and other sources to inform the indicators for each section of the report.
- 2.3 Data with the greatest likelihood of being updated on a regular basis was sought to underpin each indicator, to ensure potential future comparison. Indicators were always selected using the most recent available data to ensure their currency.

Stage 2: Obtaining and processing available data and information

- 2.4 This stage of the method involved compiling the relevant data from various sources. A variety of GIS data, documents and survey data has been used to inform the reporting. The datasets used are referenced at the end of each theme section. This report sets out a baseline for the results of future monitoring activity to be compared to. This will allow future iterations to easily identify trends in the data and explore reasons behind changes to the assets of the AONB.
- 2.5 It is important to note that where 2011 Census data (or other ONS datasets) have been used, the proportion of each census area (Middle Output Area, Lower Super Output Area or Output Area) within the AONB has been calculated and used to give approximate figures for an indicator. For example, if a Census Output Area has 25% of its area within the AONB, the data figures have been multiplied by 0.25 to approximate the figure for the AONB only.
- 2.6 The majority of the data and information used in this report has been obtained from existing sources. The main exception to this is the Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONBs Survey undertaken in winter 2018-2019. This primary data collection exercise has fed directly into this report. The objective of this survey was to understand how local communities and AONB visitors use and value the AONBs and to explore perceived issues impacting on the AONBs. The survey provided an update of a previous (in-situ) survey undertaken in 2012.
- 2.7 The 2018/19 survey was undertaken entirely online, administered by LUC and hosted by SurveyMonkey. The survey comprised a total of 46 questions (for both AONBs), aimed at both residents and visitors to the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB.
- 2.8 A full list of the questions from the survey is included in **Appendix 1**. On average, the survey took respondents 15 minutes to complete.
- 2.9 The survey ran from the 20th November 2018 to the 11th January 2019, with a total of 286 respondents. It was promoted by the AONBs and Councils through social media and email bulletins. The results of the survey are presented and analysed in Chapter 7.

³ Relevant information from Natural England includes the Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL) data which is distributed to protected landscapes on an annual basis at the time of this report.

Stage 3: Analysis and reporting

- 2.10 Where possible in the report, data has been compared to historically available datasets to identify trends. Where possible, historic data was reviewed to enable comparison between current and past condition of AONB assets. To avoid misinterpretation of any changes when comparing data, any methodological differences in comparative datasets are identified where present. The results of the data analysis have been presented using maps and charts in addition to explanatory text.
- 2.11 The different indicators identified within the report were grouped into themed chapters. Several of the chapters comprise subthemes to logically present the relevant analyses:
- Landscape character
 - Landscape character context
 - The coastline and seascapes
 - Agricultural landscape character
 - Woodland cover and management
 - Settlement and planning
 - Visual and perceptual qualities
 - Biodiversity and geodiversity
 - Biodiversity designations
 - Geodiversity designations
 - Historic environment
 - Socio-economic profile
 - Tourism and the visitor economy

3 Landscape Character



3 Landscape Character

Structure of this Chapter

3.1 Landscape character is influenced by a number of different components. This chapter has therefore been split into a number of sub-themes as follows:

- Landscape character context
- The coastline and seascapes
- Agricultural landscape character
- Woodland cover and management
- Settlement and planning
- Visual and perceptual qualities

Landscape character context

Indicators selected for this sub-theme

- National Character Area (NCA) coverage
- Landscape character context

Summary headlines

- The whole of the AONB lies within National Character Area (NCA) 82: Suffolk Coast & Heaths.
- The Suffolk County Landscape Character Assessment identifies 11 different landscape character types within the AONB.
- There are also three local and regional Landscape Character Assessments which include parts of the AONB.

Analysis of indicator: National Character Area context

3.2 This indicator provides contextual information based on the existing landscape evidence. While the boundaries for the NCAs are unlikely to undergo significant change in the next five years, the evidence contained in the NCA profiles may be updated with new information.

3.3 The whole of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB lies within National Character Area (NCA) 82, Suffolk Coast & Heaths as set out by Natural England⁴. The NCA profile describes the area to have the following key characteristics:

- Predominately low-lying landform;
- Crag deposits covered by deep, free-draining sands, gravel and till;
- Dynamic coast with long sweeping bays cut by a series of estuaries;
- Twisting alluvial valleys from west flowing rivers;
- Expansive coastal level grazing marshes;

⁴ Natural England: National Character Areas, National Character Area Profile 82: Suffolk Coast & Heaths

- Fragments of lowland heath habitats;
- A treed character with substantial coniferous forests;
- High quality vegetable production and outdoor pig units;
- Historic field patterns of small scale meadow enclosure;
- Area rich in archaeological remains from various eras;
- Sparsely settled area with small villages and farmsteads;
- Traditional buildings with a localised vernacular of soft-hued red bricks, straw thatch, pantiles or peg tiles, rendered and 'Suffolk pink' painted, or using split or knapped flint;
- Large commercial ports; and
- Extensive public access on land and rivers.

Analysis of indicator: Landscape Character context

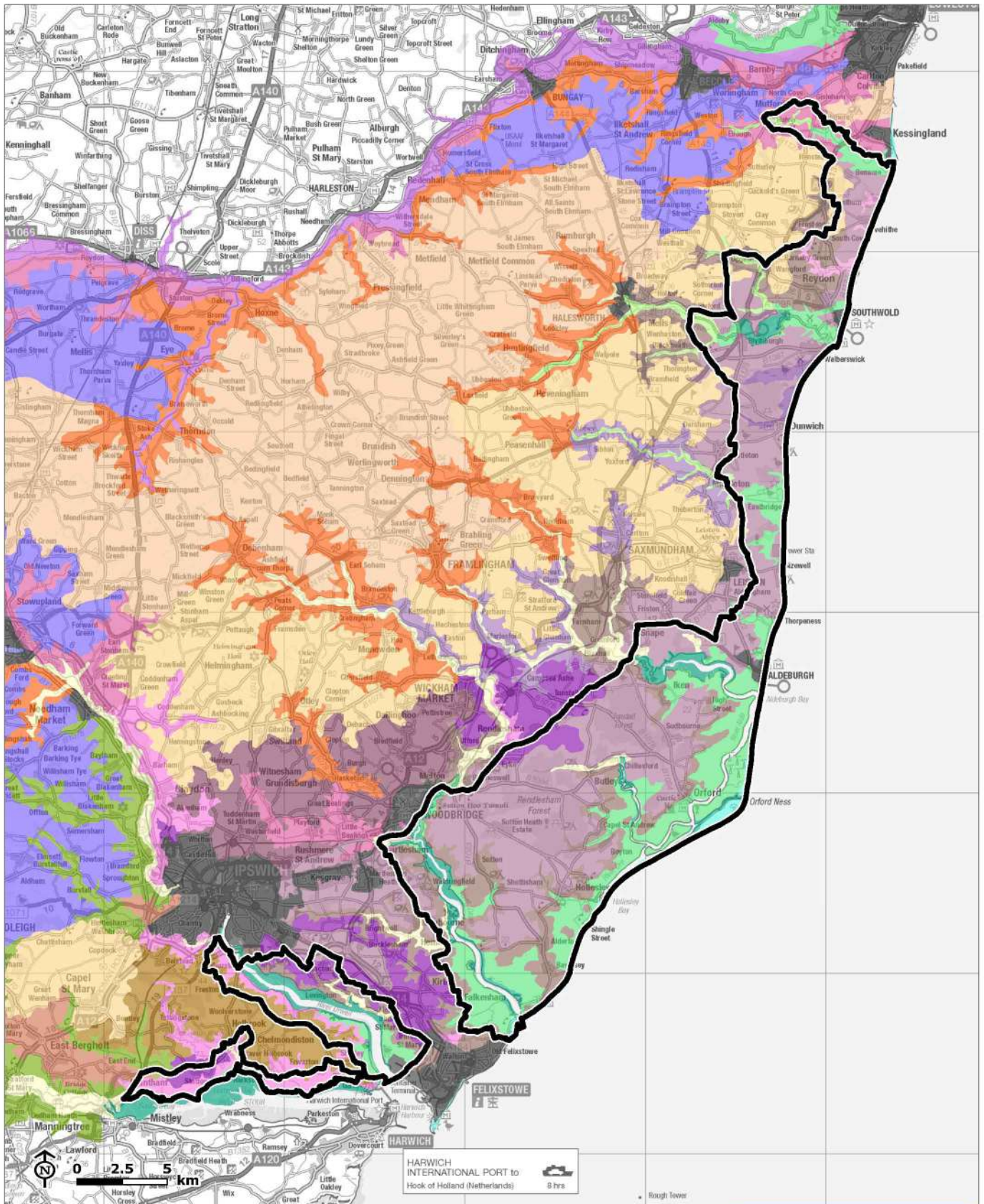
- 3.4 The Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was completed in 2008 and revised in 2011. The landscape character types (LCTs) defined in this study are shown in **Figure 3.1**. This study identified 11 different LCTs which fall within the AONB.
- 3.5 The most widespread LCT within the AONB is the Estate Sandlands. These areas are found inland and are known locally as the Sandlings and are characterised by their free draining, sandy soils. Located along the coast and following the estuaries inland are expansive areas of the Coastal Levels LCT, characterised by areas of flat marshland adjacent to the coast and estuaries. The Coastal Dunes and Shingle Ridges LCT comprise the dynamic and fragile dunes and shingle located in narrow strips along the coastline. The Open Coastal Fens LCT located to the north of Dunwich is the only example of this character type within Suffolk, characterised by wet grazing marsh and reedbeds on peaty soils.
- 3.6 Other landscape evidence which includes parts of the AONB includes:
- Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (July 2018)
 - The Shotley Peninsula and Hinterland Landscape Character Assessment (April 2013)
 - Touching the Tide: Landscape Character Assessment (August 2012)

Data sources

- Natural England National Character Area profiles
- Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

Recommendations

- The two indicators referred to in this sub-theme are primarily for contextual information and are unlikely to change significantly over the next five years.
- The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB should consider implementing projects that can provide evidence on landscape character over time. Fixed point photography could be used to monitor key views over a period of years. It can also be used to monitor the impacts of various forces for change on the landscape over time, enabling the AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB to develop appropriate policies and actions to address forces for change in the landscape.
- Projects could be undertaken by volunteers, providing the local population an opportunity to engage with the management and monitoring of the AONB.



Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Suffolk Landscape Character Types

- Ancient estate claylands
- Ancient estate farmlands
- Ancient plateau claylands
- Ancient rolling farmlands
- Coastal Dunes shingle ridges
- Coastal levels
- Estate sandlands
- Open coastal fens

- Plateau claylands
- Plateau farmlands
- Rolling estate claylands
- Rolling estate farmlands
- Rolling estate sandlands
- Rolling valley claylands
- Rolling valley farmlands
- Rolling valley farmlands and furze

- Saltmarsh & intertidal flats
- Urban
- Valley meadowlands
- Valley meadows & fens
- Wooded fens
- Wooded valley meadowlands
- Wooded valley meadowlands and fens
- Plateau estate farmlands

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Suffolk Coast & Heaths State of the AONB Report 2018

Figure 3.1: Landscape Character Types

Source: NE, SCC



The coastline and seascapes

Indicators selected for this sub-theme

3.7 The following monitoring indicators have been selected for the coastline and seascapes sub-theme:

- Seascape character context
- Coverage of Shoreline Management Plans
- Extent of Heritage Coast
- Bathing site water quality
- Water Framework Directive ecological status

Summary headlines

- The entire length of the coastline within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is defined as Heritage Coast.
- The coastline of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is covered by SMP7: Lowestoft Ness to Felixstowe Landguard Point.
- The bathing water quality of the two designated bathing sites in the AONB has declined since 2015.

3.8 As with the landscape character context sub-theme, the seascape character context, Shoreline Management Plans and Heritage Coast indicators are provided for contextual information and are unlikely to change significantly over the next five years. The bathing site water quality and Water Framework Directive ecological status indicators should be closely monitored and updated for the next iteration of the State of the AONB Report.

Analysis of indicator: Seascape character context

- 3.9 The seascape surrounding Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is an integral part of its character. The seascape is covered by two separate national level seascape character assessments; the Seascape Character Assessment for the South East Inshore marine plan area⁵ and the Seascape Character Area Assessment for East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan areas⁶.
- 3.10 The southern part of the AONB (the Stour and Orwell rivers) is located in the MCA 19: Essex and South Suffolk Estuaries and Coastal Waters as defined in the Seascape Character Assessment for the South East Inshore marine plan area⁵.
- 3.11 The rest of the AONB coastline is located within Character Area 10: Suffolk Coastal Waters as defined in the Seascape Character Assessment for East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan areas⁶.
- 3.12 A regional level Seascape Character Assessment for Suffolk, South Norfolk and North Essex was completed in 2018⁷. This study identified a total of three seascape character types along the coast of the AONB, with a further three located offshore.

⁵ LUC (2018), MMO 1134: Seascape Character Assessment for the South East Inshore marine plan area. *Marine Management Organisation*. Available Online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/750229/South_East_-_Seascape_character_assessment_report.pdf (Accessed 04/02/19).

⁶ Marine Management Organisation (2012), Seascape character area assessment East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan areas. Available Online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/east-marine-plan-areas-seascape-character-assessment> (Accessed 04/02/19).

⁷ LDA Design (2018), Seascape Character Assessment Suffolk, South Norfolk and North Essex. *Suffolk County Council*.

Analysis of indicator: Coverage of Shoreline Management Plans

- 3.13 A Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is a non-statutory document that provides a broad assessment of the long-term risks associated with coastal processes. It offers guidance to coastal engineers and managers to identify and recommend strategic and sustainable coastal defence policy options for particular lengths of coast to reduce these risks to people, developed areas and natural environments.
- 3.14 SMPs provide the vehicle for managing flood and erosion risk over the short, medium and long term. SMPs aim to define a sustainable management approach that balances interests along the shoreline, looking ahead over the short term (up to 2025), the medium term (2026 – 2055) and the long term (up to 2105), referred to as Epochs 1, 2 and 3 respectively.
- 3.15 A key focus of SMPs is the definition of management response, distinguishing between sections of coast where the priority is:
- to hold the line;
 - managed realignment;
 - no active intervention; and
 - to advance the line.
- 3.16 The coastline of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is covered by SMP7: Lowestoft Ness to Felixstowe Landguard Point⁸. The Shoreline Management Plan was first developed in 1998 and was reviewed in line with Government guidance before being formally adopted and published in the spring of 2012. **Figure 3.2** illustrates the short-term (left panel) and long-term (right panel) management responses along the Suffolk Coast. Because of the coastline's sensitive location it requires active management, without which major towns and around 12,000 properties would be at risk from erosion. Key issues and responses identified within the Shoreline Management Plan are presented in **Table 3.1**.

Analysis of indicator: Extent of Heritage Coast

- 3.17 The whole of the AONB coastline is defined as a 'Heritage Coast'⁹. This non-statutory designation identifies stretches of particularly undeveloped coastline in England. The Heritage Coast designation looks to conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the area along with the flora and fauna, heritage features, public enjoyment, inshore water quality and health and agriculture, forestry and fishing present along the coastline. The extent of Suffolk Heritage Coast is displayed in **Figure 3.3**.

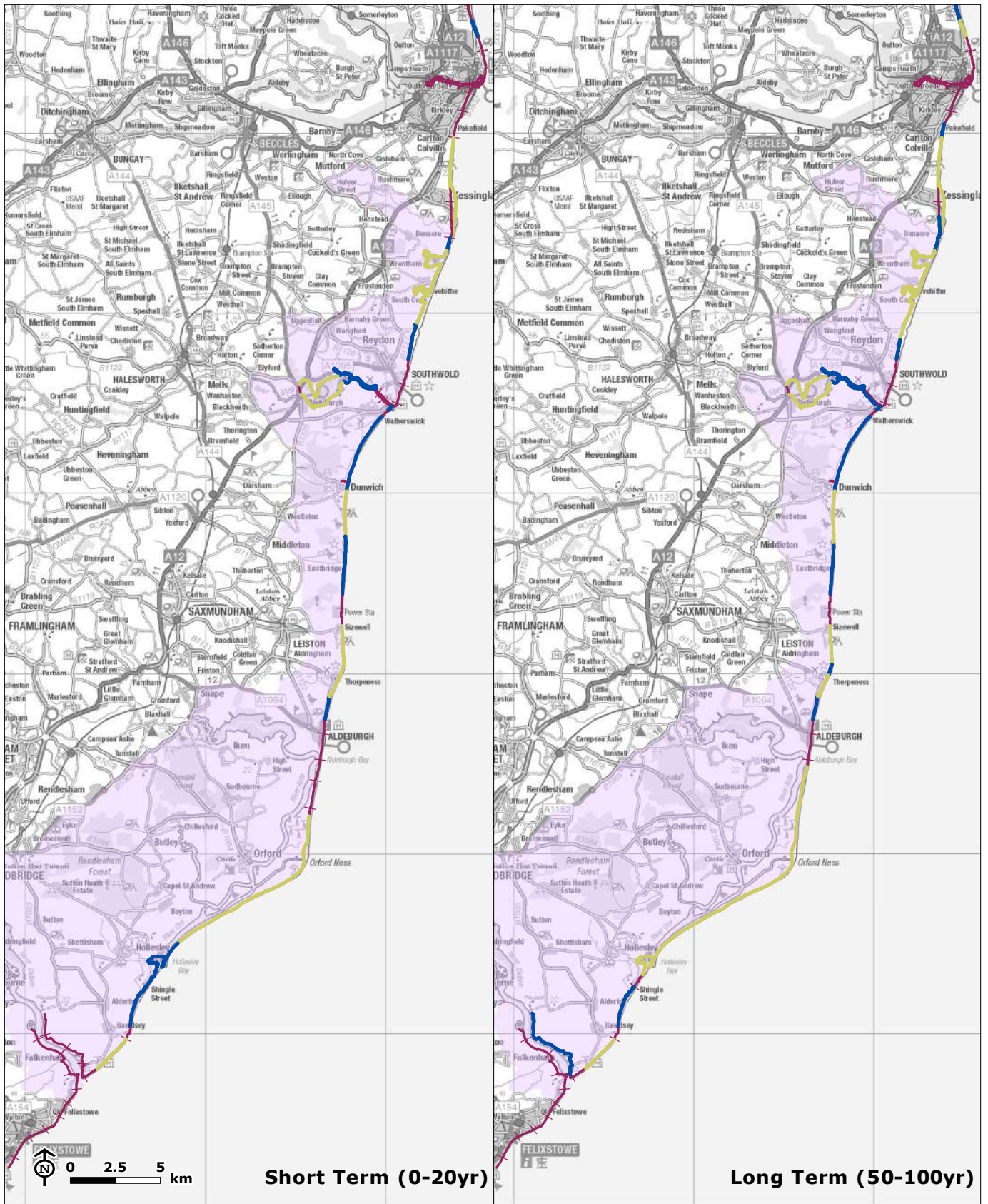
⁸ Suffolk Coastal District Council (2010), SMP 7 Lowestoft Ness to Landguard Point. Online Available at: <http://www.suffolksmp2.org.uk/>

⁹ Natural England (2015), Heritage Coasts. Online Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role>

Table 3.1: Shoreline Management Plan issues and responses.

| Sector | Issues and features at risk | SMP Responses |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Property | Centres of residential and commercial development. | Provide continued protection to key centers |
| Infrastructure | Risk of flooding to road network at Lowestoft, Felixstowe, and the A12. | Continued defense action |
| Agriculture | Increased tidal flooding from estuaries and loss of land to coastal erosion particularly at Hollesley Bay, Minsmere Valley and the Kessingland Levels. | Sustaining natural defenses and maintaining sluices. |
| Historic environment | Greyfairs Priory at Dunwich, the Hospital of the Holy Trinity and the village of Covehithe. | Increase research and documentation of the features at risk before they are lost. |
| Nature conservation | Coastal flooding, including flooding of areas of fresh water interest. | Maintain balance between conserving conservation and allowing natural succession. Creation of new habitat to compensate for losses. Monitoring to better understand risk to nature conservation. |
| Landscape | Loss of historic landscape and areas of nature conservation interest. | |
| Access and coastal use | Risk of loss of the coastal path from erosion. | Coast path maintenance Retention of beaches to conserve their tourism value. |

Source: SMP 7: Lowestoft Ness to Landguard Point (2010)



Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Shoreline Management Plan

- Hold the existing defence line
- Managed realignment
- No active intervention

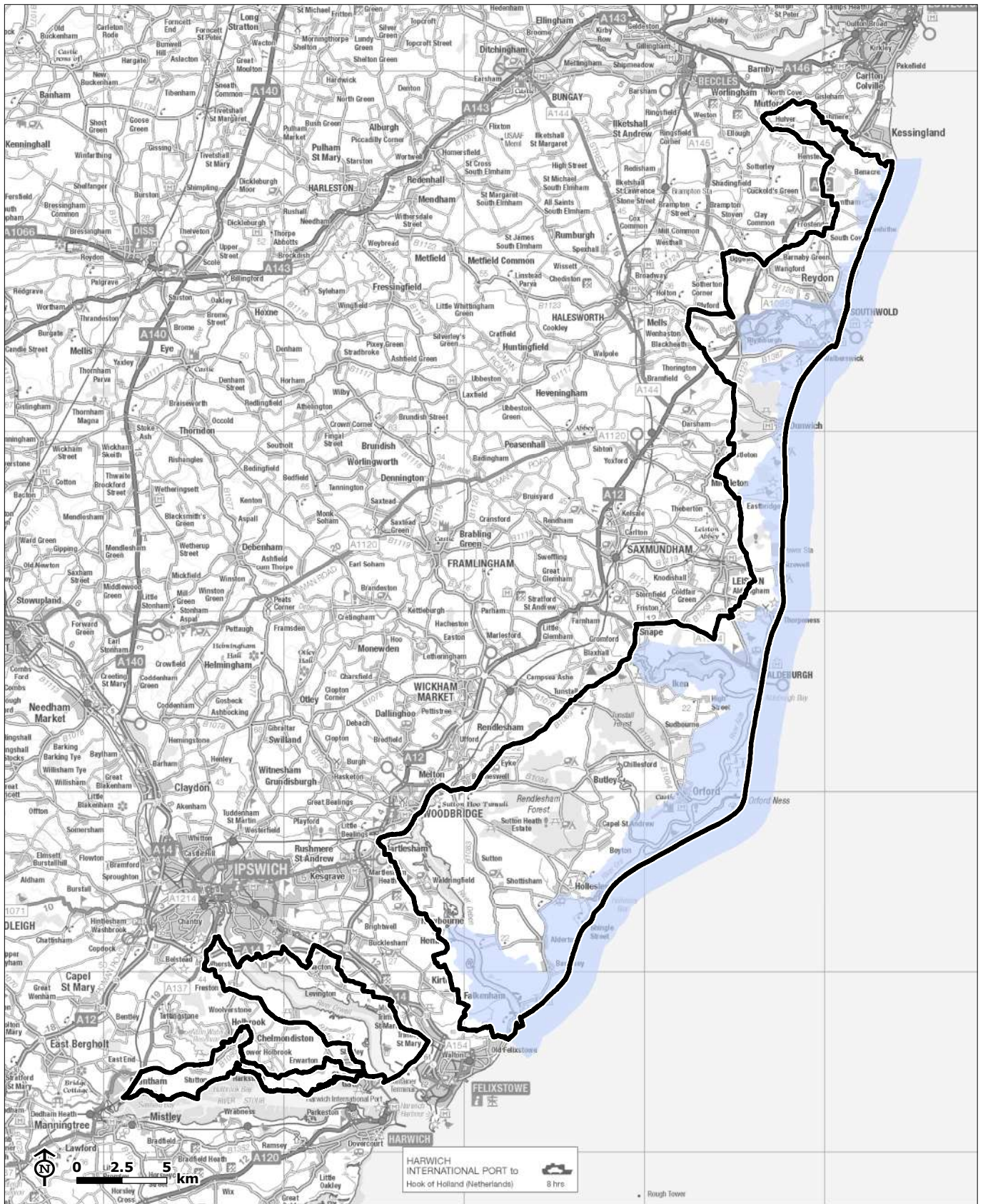
Source: NE, EA

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Figure 3.2: Shoreline Management Plan



Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000



- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
- Suffolk Heritage Coast

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**Figure 3.3: Extent of the
Heritage Coast**



Source: NE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Analysis of indicator: Bathing site water quality

- 3.18 There are two designated bathing sites within the AONB at 'Southwold – the Pier' and 'Southwold – the Denes'. **Table 3.2** shows the water quality classification of the bathing waters from 2015 to 2018. These results are derived from water quality assessments obtained under the Bathing Water Directive. The water quality of both sites has declined in recent years.

Table 3.2: Water quality at designated bathing sites within the AONB (2015 – 2018)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Designated bathing site name | | | | |
| Southwold - The Pier | Excellent (3 stars) | Excellent (3 stars) | Excellent (3 stars) | Good (2 stars) |
| Southwold - The Denes | Good (2 stars) | Good (2 stars) | Sufficient (1 star) | Sufficient (1 star) |

Source: Environment Agency

Analysis of indicator: Water Framework Directive Ecological Status

- 3.19 The data for this indicator has been derived from Natural England Monitoring for Protected Landscapes data. As well as the current status, this data also contains Ecological Objectives which aim to improve waterbodies' status against the Water Framework Directive.

Rivers

- 3.20 Within the AONB, there are 58 kilometres of river which are monitored under the Water Framework Directive. Four kilometres are classed as good status, 49 kilometres are classed as moderate status and five kilometres are classed as poor status.
- 3.21 The Ecological Objectives for the rivers are as follows: 4.45 kilometres should be 'good' status by 2021, while 35 kilometres should be 'good' status by 2027.

Coastal water

- 3.22 There are nine coastal/transitional waterbodies within the AONB which are monitored under the Water Framework Directive. One is currently 'good' status and eight are 'moderate' status. The Ecological Objectives state that two of the 'moderate' status sites should improve to 'good' status by 2027.

Data sources

- 3.23 The data sources used for this sub-theme are as follows:
- Natural England
 - Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL)(2018 and 2017)
 - Heritage Coasts
 - Seascape character assessments
 - Seascape Character Assessment for the South East Inshore marine plan¹⁰ area
 - Seascape Character Area Assessment East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan¹¹ areas
 - Seascape Character Assessment Suffolk, South Norfolk and North Essex¹²

¹⁰ Marine Management Organisation (2012), Seascape character area assessment East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan areas. Available Online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/east-marine-plan-areas-seascape-character-assessment> (Accessed 04/02/19).

¹¹ Marine Management Organisation (2012), Seascape character area assessment East Inshore and East Offshore marine plan areas. Available Online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/east-marine-plan-areas-seascape-character-assessment> (Accessed 04/02/19).

¹² LDA Design (2018), Seascape Character Assessment Suffolk, South Norfolk and North Essex. *Suffolk County Council*. Available online at: http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/Seascape_Character.aspx (Accessed 04/02/19).

- Shoreline Management Plan 7¹³
- Environment Agency
 - Bathing water quality data

Recommendations

- The AONB should monitor all of the indicators under the 'Coastline and Seascapes' theme every five years.
- In recent years there has been a decline in water quality at the two designated bathing sites. The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB should work with the Environment Agency to identify the cause of this decline and whether there are any policies/actions that can be implemented to improve the water quality and prevent further declines.
- The next State of the AONB Report should explore whether the Water Framework Directive ecological targets have been met or are on target to be met (depending on when the State of the AONB Report is next updated). The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB could collect data on planning application approval and accordance rates in areas defined as Heritage Coast. The undeveloped character that makes this stretch of coast special and unique may be under threat from incremental development.

¹³ Suffolk Coastal District Council (2010), SMP 7 Lowestoft Ness to Landguard Point. Online Available at: <http://www.suffolksmp2.org.uk/>

Agricultural Landscape Character

Indicators selected for this sub-theme

3.24 The following monitoring indicators have been selected for the 'Agricultural Landscape Character' sub-theme:

- Patterns of agricultural land use and farm types
- Livestock numbers and types
- Area of land under agri-environment schemes

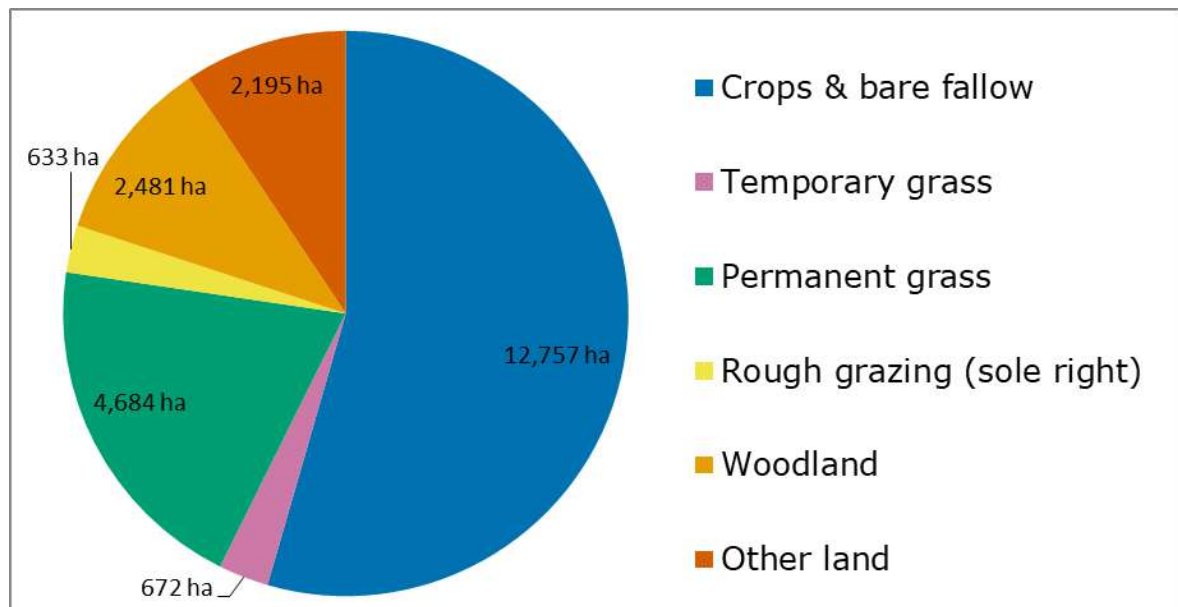
Summary headlines

- Crops and bare fallow is the most common agricultural land use, accounting for over half of the farmland (54.5%) in the AONB.
- The majority of farm holdings are classified as general cropping.
- The number of all livestock animal species between 2008 and 2016 reduced in number, except for sheep which increased slightly (5.8%) Poultry numbers decreased significantly between 2008 and 2009 and have not recovered.
- 16,194.1 hectares (39%) of the AONB was managed as part of an agri-environment scheme at the end of 2018. The majority of this was managed under an Environmental Stewardship agreement (15,906 ha), while 288 hectares was managed under Countryside Stewardship.
- Over a third (34.3%) of agricultural land is Grade 4 (poor quality) according to the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification.

Analysis of indicator: Patterns of agricultural land use and farm types

3.25 **Figure 3.4** shows the area (hectares) of land under various different land use types in 2016 (the most recent information available). This data illustrates that more than half (54.5%) of the agricultural land in the AONB is used for crops and bare fallow. Crops and bare fallow has been the most common land use type since 2008. Permanent grass, temporary grass and rough grazing amount to 5,989 hectares or 25% of agricultural land.

Figure 3.4: Area of agricultural land use types within the AONB (ha)

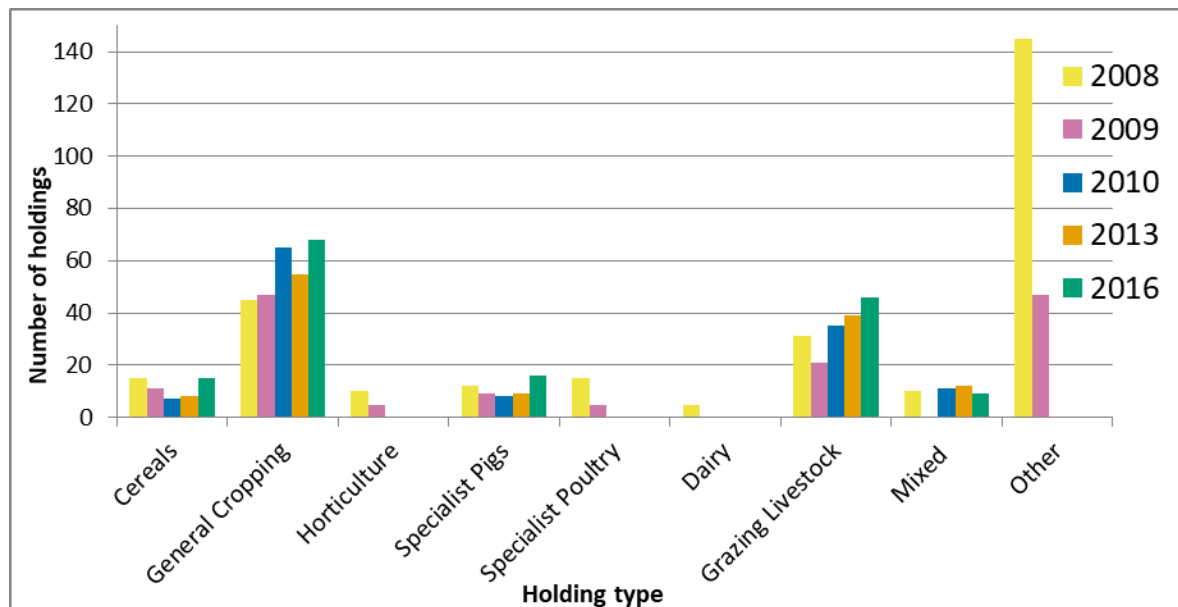


Source: Defra June Agricultural Survey 2016

Farm holdings

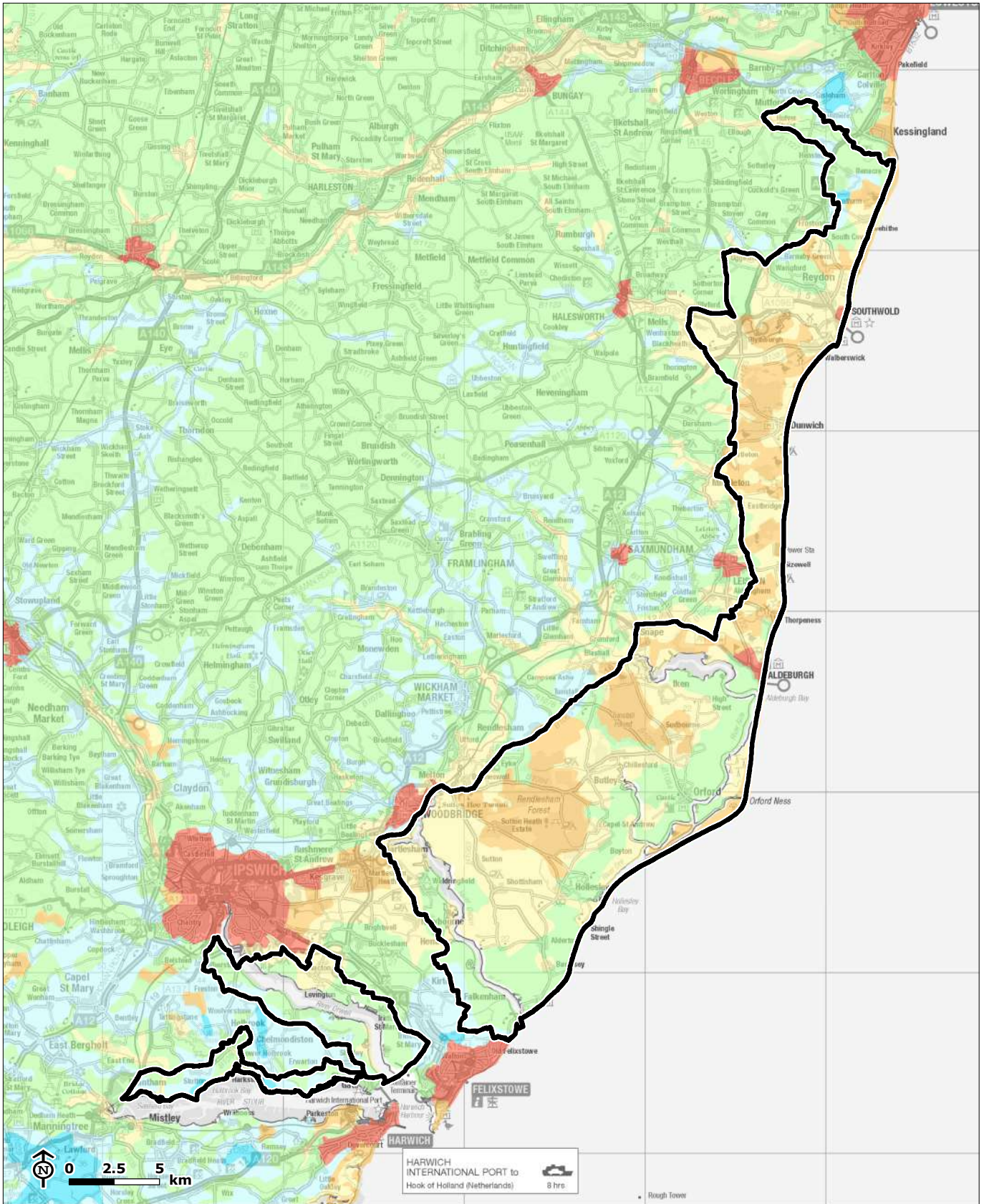
- 3.26 The chart at **Figure 3.5** shows the number of the farm holdings within each holding type from the Defra June Agricultural Survey. It must be noted that the Defra June Agricultural Survey methodology changed between 2008 and 2009. Previously the survey collected data on all agricultural holdings. The survey now only collects information on commercial agricultural holdings over a certain output/size. The altered methodology is likely to be the reason for the large decrease in total holdings between 2008 and 2009.
- 3.27 General cropping has been the most common farm holding type between 2008 and 2016, which reflects the fact that crops and bare fallow are the most common agricultural land use. These comprise 42% of all holdings in 2016. In this time period the number of farm holdings for general cropping and grazing livestock has steadily increased, with 68 general cropping holdings and 46 grazing livestock holdings in 2016. Despite an increase in the number of grazing livestock holdings, there has been a reduction in the number of livestock in the AONB. In recent years there has been a trend towards smaller farm holdings, which may explain the increase in livestock holdings although numbers of livestock are steady/decreasing (as discussed in paragraph 3.30).
- 3.28 Data for horticulture, specialist poultry and dairy farming holdings have been withheld in more recent years. This is usually due to low counts and the need to prevent disclosure of details about individual holdings. Cereals, specialist pigs and mixed holdings have remained low in number.

Figure 3.5: Number of farm holdings for each farm type within the AONB



Source: Defra June Agricultural Survey 2008, 2009, 2013 and 2016. No information was given in some years for horticulture, specialist poultry, dairy, mixed and other, as information was suppressed to prevent disclosure of information about individual holdings. It is important to note that the large reduction in holdings classified as 'other' is likely a result of methodology changes as described in paragraph 3.26.

- 3.29 The map at **Figure 3.6** shows the proportion of the land within the AONB under different Agricultural Land Classification grades. The quality of agricultural land in the AONB is generally average to low, with 30.3% of the land within Grade 3 (good to moderate quality) and 34.3% within Grade 4 (poor quality). 0.4% of the AONB is Grade 1 (very good) quality agricultural land. Grade 2 quality agricultural land (5.3%) is found almost exclusively on the inland boundaries of the AONB or along the estuaries with the exception of a small coastal area north of Felixstowe. Around a quarter of the AONB area is under non-agricultural (21.7%) or urban land use (0.6%). Non-agricultural land is primarily areas of forestry or shingle beaches.



Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Agricultural Land Classification

- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Non Agricultural
- Urban

Source: NE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

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**Figure 3.6: Agricultural
Land Classification**



Analysis of indicator: Livestock numbers and types

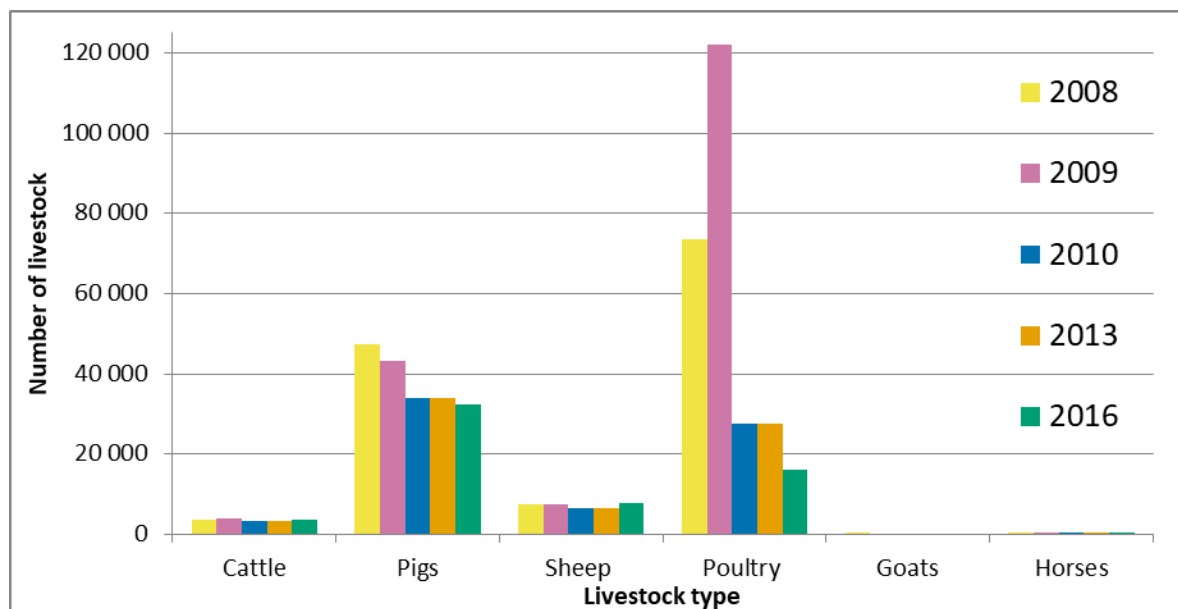
- 3.30 This indicator examines livestock types and numbers within the AONB from 2008 to 2016, when the latest figures from Defra’s June Agricultural Survey were released. All livestock types (with the exception of sheep) have reduced in number between 2008 and 2016 as shown in **Figure 3.7**. Sheep numbers have increased slightly by 5.8%.
- 3.31 The reduction in the number of specialist poultry holdings (as shown in **Figure 3.5**) is reflected in livestock numbers; there was a 78% reduction in the number of poultry within the AONB between 2008 and 2016. The main driver of this dramatic reduction in the numbers of poultry and poultry farms is likely to be bird flu outbreaks in the county which occurred in 2008-2010. Large numbers of livestock were culled to prevent the spread of the disease around this time. It is also important to note that the Defra June Survey methodology was altered between 2008 and 2009, which may also result in some smaller poultry holdings being excluded from the results.
- 3.32 Currently pigs are the most numerous livestock species within the AONB, comprising 53.9% of the total number of livestock. The exact numbers of different livestock types can be seen in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3: Livestock types and numbers in the AONB (2008-2016)

| Livestock type | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2013 | 2016 |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Cattle | 3,583 | 3,866 | 4,525 | 3,458 | 3,490 |
| Pigs | 47,404 | 43,225 | 50,130 | 33,916 | 32,358 |
| Sheep | 7,417 | 7,598 | 16,836 | 6,602 | 7,849 |
| Poultry | 73,480 | 122,030 | 12,789 | 27,410 | 15,994 |
| Goats | 14 | * | * | * | * |
| Horses | 472 | 378 | 309 | 295 | 338 |
| Total livestock | 132,370 | 177,097 | 84,589 | 71,681 | 60,029 |

Source: Defra June Agricultural Survey 2016. No information was given for goats 2009-2016 (*), as information was suppressed to prevent disclosure of information about individual holdings.

Figure 3.7: Livestock types and numbers in the AONB (2008-2016)



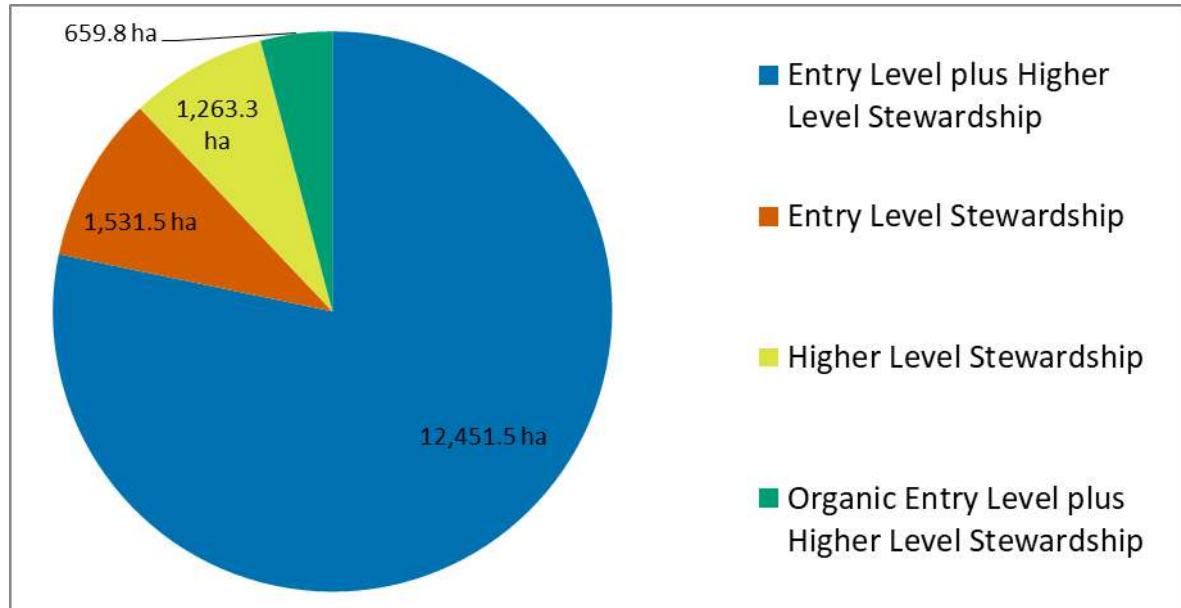
Source: Defra June Agricultural Survey 2016. No information was given for goats 2009-2016, as information was suppressed to prevent disclosure of information about individual holdings.

Analysis of indicator: Area of land under agri-environment schemes

- 3.33 A total of 15,906.1 hectares (39.2%) of the land in the AONB is included in an Environmental Stewardship scheme. The most common scheme type is Entry Level plus Higher Level

Stewardship (30.7% of the AONB area), shown in blue in **Figure 3.8**. Several of the Environmental Stewardship agreements in the AONB expired in 2018; these are shown on **Figure 3.9** with hatched lines.

Figure 3.8: Area managed by different tiers of Environmental Stewardship Schemes



Source: Natural England Agricultural Stewardship (downloaded 2018)

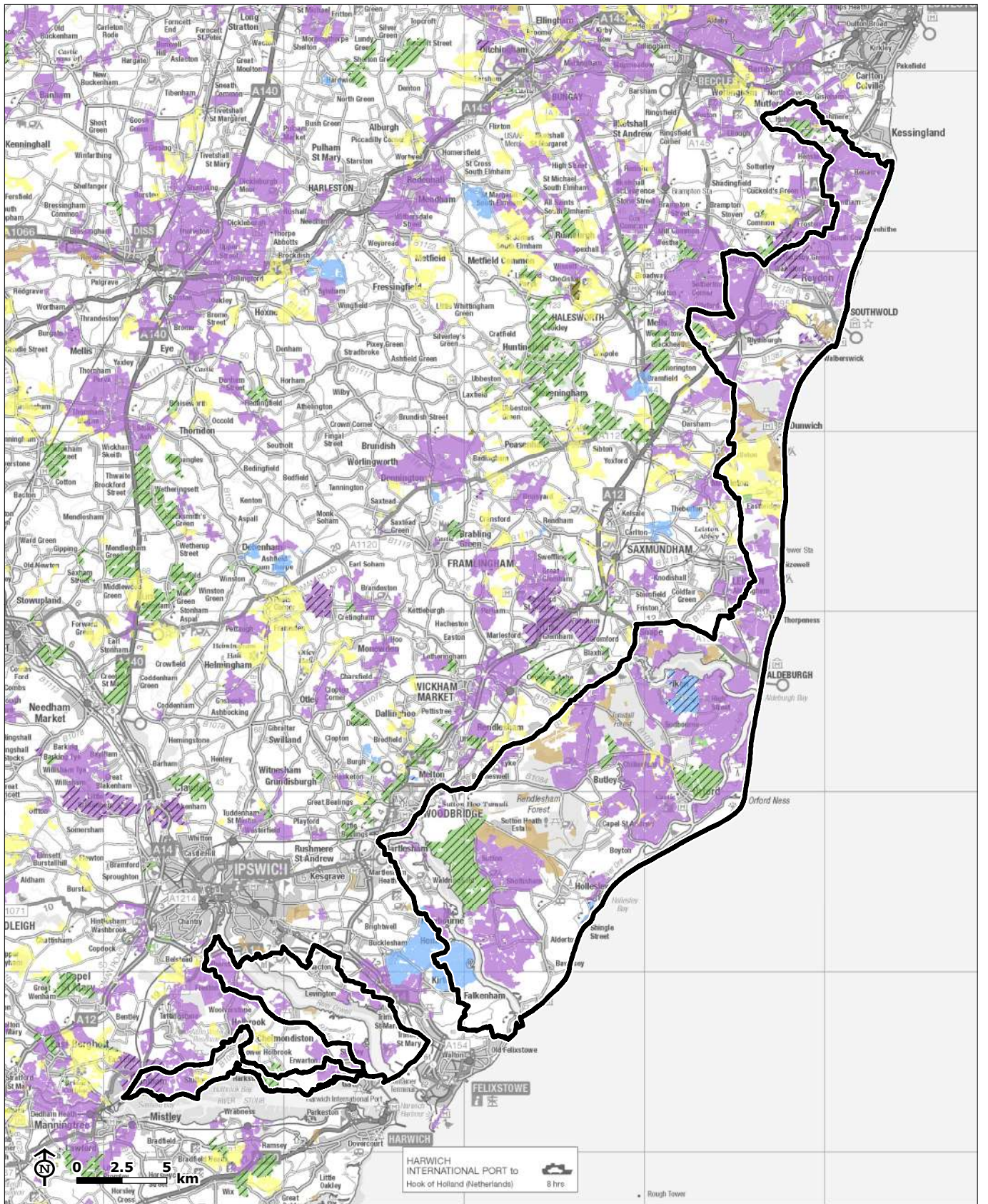
- 3.34 There are a total of six Countryside Stewardship agreements within Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB which collectively cover an area of 288.0 hectares (0.7% of AONB). 164.6 ha are within a Higher Tier scheme, while the remaining 123.4 ha is within a Middle Tier scheme.

Data sources

- Natural England Environmental Stewardship and Countryside Stewardship GIS data (downloaded 2018)
- Defra June Agricultural Survey Data (2008, 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2016)
- Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL), 2017 and 2018

Recommendations

- The AONB should continue to monitor the indicators for agricultural land use every five years or as data becomes available from Defra. This will allow the AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB to react to potential forces for change which may impact on the character and condition of the landscape.
- Of particular interest will be the monitoring of the extent of agri-environment schemes, particularly whether new Countryside Stewardship Schemes are established to replace Environmental Stewardship schemes which have recently finished or are due to finish in the next few years.
- It is envisaged that more in-depth information on the cost, spatial coverage and options of Countryside Stewardship Schemes will be available when these indicators are revisited for the next State of the AONB Report, although by this time a post-Brexit agri-environment scheme is likely to be in place to include as part of the analysis. Given this period of uncertainty and the importance of appropriate agricultural land management in the AONB's high quality environment, this is a key 'force for change' for the AONB to monitor.



- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
 - Countryside Stewardship Schemes
 - Environmental Stewardship Schemes**
 - Entry Level Stewardship
 - Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship
 - Higher Level Stewardship
 - Organic Entry Level Stewardship
 - Organic Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship
 - Expired in 2018
- Source: NE
- Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000**

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Figure 3.9: Extent of Agri-Environment Schemes



Woodland cover and management

Indicators selected for this sub-theme

3.35 The following monitoring indicators have been selected for the 'Woodland cover and management' sub-theme:

- Extent and type of woodland cover
- Extent of actively managed woodland

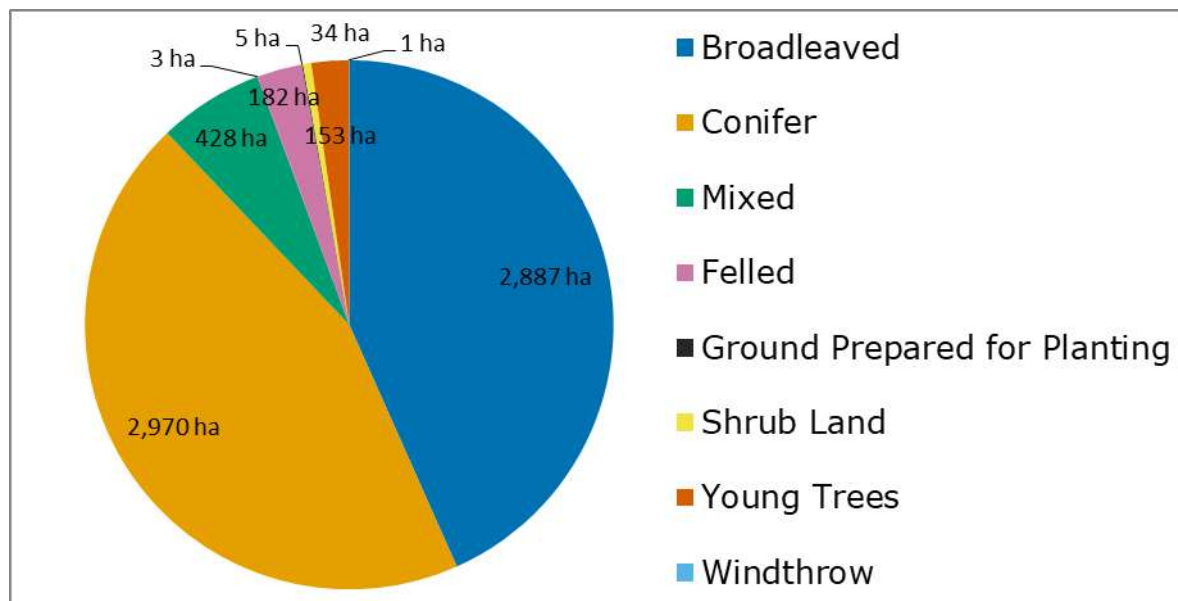
Summary headlines

- Woodland covers a total of 6,352 hectares or 15.7% of the AONB.
- The most common woodland type is coniferous 2,970 hectares or 46.8% of all woodland areas, while 45.4% (or 2,887 hectares) is broadleaved.
- Ancient woodland comprises 316.5 hectares (1%) of the AONB.
- 66% of woodland in the AONB is actively managed according to the Forestry Commission's *England Managed Woodland Headline Performance Indicator*.
- 18 hectares of woodland and 62 individual trees are managed as part of Environmental Stewardship Schemes.

Analysis of indicator: Extent and type of woodland cover

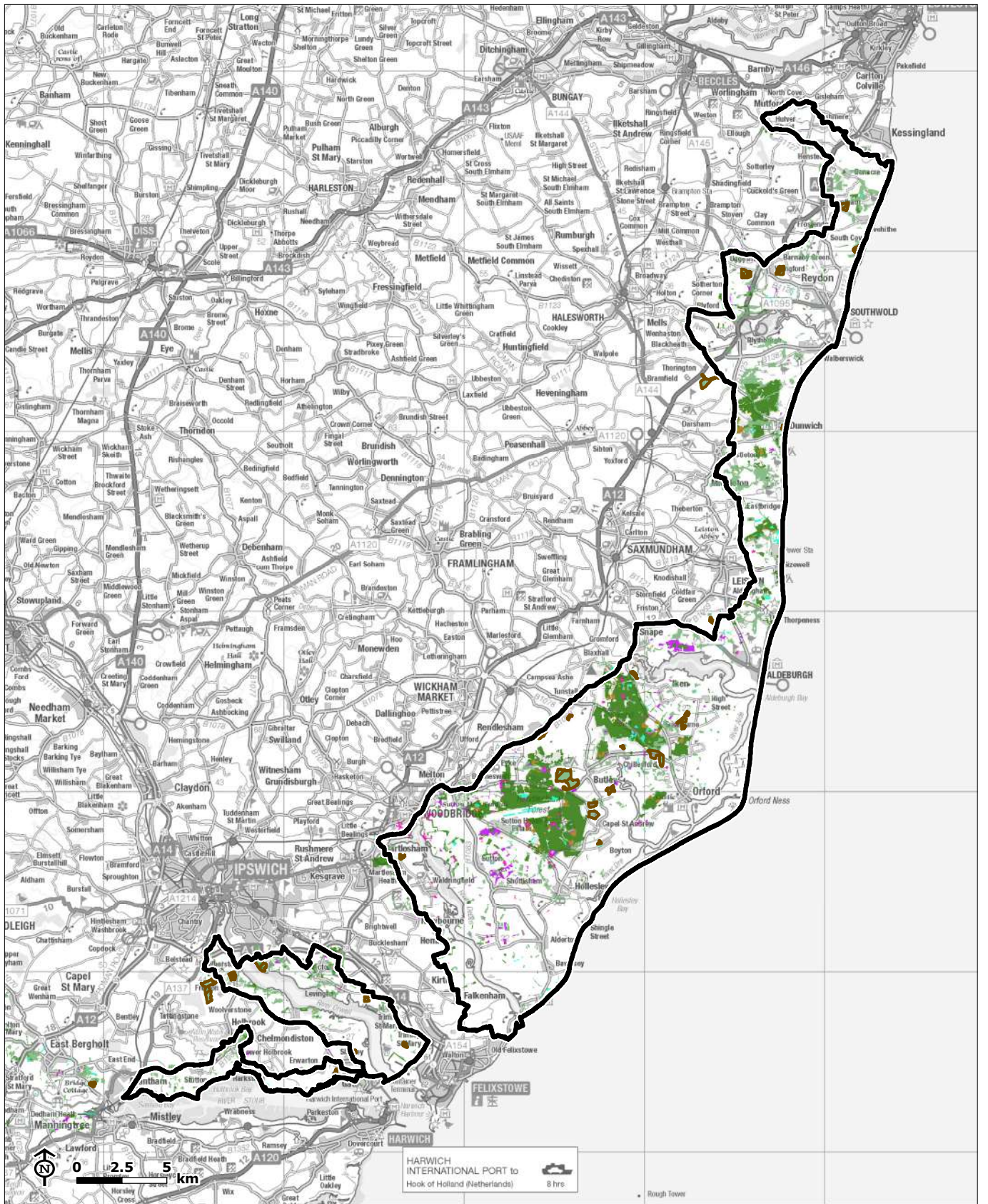
3.36 Total woodland cover in the AONB is 6,351.7 ha¹⁴ (15.7%). Of this woodland, 46.8% is coniferous and 45.4% is broadleaved. Other woodland types within the AONB include mixed woodland (428.1ha), felled woodland (182 ha), young trees (153 ha), ground prepared for planting (5 ha), coppice (3 ha) and shrub land (1 ha) as displayed in **Figure 3.10**. The spatial distribution of woodland within the AONB is mapped in **Figure 3.11**. Coniferous woodland tends to be located in within large plantations, including Rendlesham Forest, Tunstall Forest and Dunwich Forest. Conversely, broadleaved woodland tends to occur in much smaller blocks scattered throughout the AONB.

Figure 3.10: Area and type of woodland cover in the AONB (National Forest Inventory)



Source: Forestry Commission National Forest Inventory GIS Data (2017) (downloaded 2018).

¹⁴ Natural England, 2017. Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes (MEOPL), PLNB2 and PLEco5



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**Figure 3.11: Woodland
Coverage**



Source: NE, FC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

- 3.37 Ancient and semi-natural woodland covers 316.5 hectares (1%) of land within the AONB. There are some larger blocks of ancient woodland located in around the eastern edge of Rendlesham Forest including Staverton Park, Walter Wood, Oak Wood and Carmens Wood.

Analysis of indicator: Woodland management

- 3.38 According to the Forestry Commission's England Managed Woodland Headline Performance Indicator, 66% of woodland within Suffolk Coast & Heaths (4,509 hectares) is actively managed. It is worth noting that many of the woodlands in the AONB undergo some form of management, and this may not be recorded within the Forestry Commission's methodology for this performance indicator.
- 3.39 A total of 18 ha of woodland are managed under an agri-environment stewardship scheme¹⁵. 15 hectares of woodland are managed under option HC7: Maintenance of woodland, two hectares are under option HC8: Restoration of woodland and one hectare is managed under option EC4: Management of woodland edges. 62 individual trees are managed as part of an Environmental Stewardship scheme.
- 3.40 Equivalent data for woodland/trees managed as part of Countryside Stewardship agreements is not currently available.

Data sources

- Natural England (data downloaded 2018)
- Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL), 2017
- Forestry Commission's National Forest Inventory 2017 (downloaded 2018)

Recommendations

- Data for these indicators should be re-visited on a five-year basis to obtain information on any changes in woodland cover. Climate change may put further pressures on woodlands and individual trees making them more susceptible to disease or pests, incidences of which should be monitored.
- It would be useful to collect data on the condition of woodlands in the AONB for future monitoring purposes.
- Existing woodland should be managed appropriately in accordance with the AONB Management Plan. The 2018-2023 Management Plan highlights the need for an increase in the extent of native woodland in the AONB to enhance the landscape and provide wildlife benefits. The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB should collect data on levels of woodland planting over the next five years to measure progress.
- Plantation woodlands should be carefully managed for the benefit of the landscape (e.g. the avoidance of clear felling), in addition to the other benefits that these areas provide such as the provision of well managed recreation land.

¹⁵ Natural England (2017), Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes (MEOPL), PLNB1c

Settlement and planning

Indicators selected for this sub-theme

- Number and type of dwellings
- Number and type of planning applications
- Settlements subject to parish or neighbourhood plans
- Consideration of AONB in neighbourhood or parish plans

Summary headlines

- Of the 16,712 dwellings in the AONB, 41.7% are detached and 30.9% are semi-detached.
- The component local planning authorities received a total of 816 planning applications in the AONB in 2018.
- In the area covered by Babergh Mid Suffolk Local Planning Authority, the majority of planning applications were for alterations, conversions or extensions.
- Two Local Plans cover parts of the AONB area; neither have been adopted at the time of this report.
- Six neighbourhood plans have been adopted for settlements in the AONB.

Analysis of indicator: Number and type of dwellings

- 3.41 UK Census 2011¹⁶ data indicates that there are a total of 16,712 dwellings in the AONB. These are broken down into different dwelling types in **Table 3.4** below. Detached houses account for 41.2% of dwellings and semi-detached properties comprise 30.9% of dwellings.

Table 3.4: Number and type of dwellings in the AONB

| Property Type | Number of dwellings | Percentage of dwellings |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Detached | 6,965 | 41.7% |
| Semi-detached | 5,165 | 30.9% |
| Terraced | 3,103 | 18.6% |
| Maisonette | 1,297 | 7.8% |
| Caravan or other mobile or temporary structure | 182 | 1.1% |
| Total | 16,712 | |

Source: ONS UK Census (2011)

Analysis of indicator: Number and type of planning applications

- 3.42 In 2018, the district councils of Suffolk Coastal, Babergh Mid Suffolk and Waveney have collectively received 861 planning applications to comment on (excluding those which were for the discharge of conditions), for proposed developments within the AONB. The most recent complete year of planning data can be seen in **Table 3.5**.

Number of planning applications and planning decision in 2018

- 3.43 The outcome of planning applications in the AONB (2018) is shown in Table 3.5. 63.4% of planning applications were granted planning permission. A higher percentage of applications were approved in Babergh District (73.7%) than in Suffolk and Waveney District (62.4%).

¹⁶ Where an Output area straddles the AONB boundary, a proportion of the Output Area total has been included as being within the AONB, based on land areas.

Table 3.5: Number of planning applications and planning decision in 2018

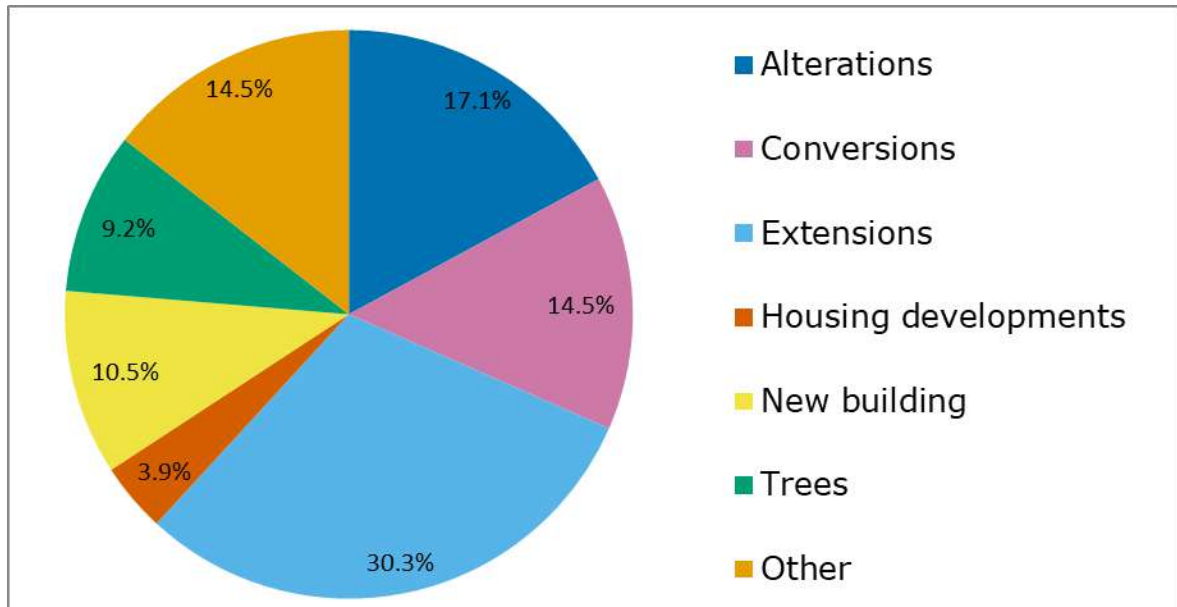
| Decision | Suffolk Coast and Waveney | Babergh | Totals | Percentage of applications (%) |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------------|
| Permission granted | 490 | 56 | 546 | 63.4 |
| Permission refused | 47 | 2 | 49 | 5.7 |
| Other | 248 | 18 | 266 | 30.9 |
| Total | 785 | 76 | 861 | |

Source: Suffolk & Waveney District Councils and Babergh District Council (2018)

Type of planning applications in 2018

3.44 Data for applications in Babergh Mid Suffolk district contained enough detail to categorise the planning applications into the groups shown in **Figure 3.12**. The most common planning application type in 2018 was extensions which accounted for 30.3% of planning applications. Alterations and conversions were also both frequently applied for amounting to 17.1% and 14.5% of applications respectively. All of the planning applications for housing developments were relatively small scale, with less than 25 homes. It is worth noting that it is not possible to undertake the same analysis for Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Districts with the current available data.

Figure 3.12: Types of planning application, Babergh Mid Suffolk (2018)



Source: Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council (2018)

Analysis of indicator: Consideration of the AONB in neighbourhood or parish plans

3.45 **Table 3.6** shows the location of existing and potential neighbourhood/parish plans within the AONB. At the time of this report, six of Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted.

Table 3.6: Consideration of the AONB in neighbourhood or parish plans

| Authority | Neighbourhood plan area | Approval of Neighbourhood plan area date | Neighbourhood plan adopted date | Policies which may affect the AONB |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Waveney | Reydon | 03/12/2018 | N/A | N/A |
| | Southwold | 03/02/2014 | N/A | N/A |
| | Kessingland (part of) | 09/12/2013 | 25/01/2017 | "Focus development on the edge of the physical limits of Kessingland Village." |
| | Henstead with Hulver Street (part of) | 14/09/2016 | N/A | N/A |
| | Mutford (part of) | 13/07/2016 | N/A | N/A |
| Suffolk Coastal | Wenhaston with Mellis Hamlet (part of) | 02/04/2015 | 17/07/2018 | "To protect the AONB from significant development." "To limit new housing to within the physical limits boundary" |
| | Aldringham cum Thorpe | 05/05/2016 | N/A | N/A |
| | Leiston | 29/10/2013 | 23/03/2017 | "Identify land to accommodate the minimum amount of housing required and then the most suitable locations for this, whilst ensuring it addresses the needs of Leiston." |
| | Rendlesham (part of) | 29/10/2013 | 19/03/2015 | "Sustainable housing growth outside of the District Centre" |
| | Melton (Part of) | 24/12/2013 | 25/01/2018 | "Infrastructure in Melton has not kept pace with its growth over time and that there is a need to ensure new growth is appropriately supported by new infrastructure" |
| | Woodbridge (part of) | 05/05/2015 | N/A | N/A |
| | Martlesham (part of) | 05/05/2015 | 17/07/2018 | "Population is likely to double over the next 15 to 20 years with the building of 2,000 homes on land currently proposed for development by CEG at Adastral Park." |
| Babergh | Chelmondiston | 23/03/2018 | N/A | N/A |
| | Holbrook | 06/04/2018 | N/A | N/A |

Analysis of indicator: Consideration of the AONB in Local Plans

3.46 The AONB falls within two separate Local Plan areas; Babergh (joint with Mid Suffolk) and East Suffolk (which comprises Suffolk Coast and Waveney local planning authorities).

3.47 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, First Draft (July 2018)¹⁷, has been written jointly by Suffolk Coast and Waveney District Councils. The final Draft Local Plan will be completed on the 25th of February 2019. Key mentions and considerations of the AONB within the First Draft of the Local Plan are as follows;

- Special care will be exercised within, or in the setting of the sensitive AONB in accordance with Policy SCLP10.3.
- Major developments in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB should be restricted unless in exceptional circumstances it can be demonstrated to be a proposal in the public interest.
- Protection of the AONB relates not only to the area designated but also to its setting.
- Proposals must be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, taking into account any views of the site from the AONB.

¹⁷ Suffolk Coastal District Council (2018), Suffolk Coastal First Draft Local Plan.

3.48 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are currently in the process of writing a new Joint Local Plan. The Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan: Consultation Document (August 2017)¹⁸ has the following mentions and considerations of the AONB;

- The AONB is described as being an 'environmental asset' to be protected and enhanced for future generations.
- The AONB is noted to be an area of 'principle importance' importance for landscape-scale conservation of biodiversity.
- Notes that the AONB has a diverse landscape character.

Data sources

- ONS UK Census (2011)
- Local planning authorities
 - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
 - Suffolk Coastal District Council
 - Waveney District Council

Recommendations

- All indicators within the settlement and planning sub-theme should be updated for the next State of the AONB Report.
- The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB should work together to ensure all policy documents include specific reference to the preservation and management of the AONB landscape.
- There is a need for more detailed information on planning applications to be collated by the AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB. This should include the number and type of planning applications per year.
- Data on accordance rates (i.e. the level of applications where the LPA decision agrees with the opinion of the AONB) is not currently available. The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB should aim to collect this data on a monthly or annual basis as accordance rates provide a good indicator of how the LPAs AONB policies are applied in practice.

¹⁸ Babergh District Council & Mid Suffolk District council (2017), Babergh & Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan: Consultation Document.

Visual and perceptual qualities

Indicators selected for this sub-theme

- Levels of tranquillity
- Dark night skies
- Number of pylons

Summary headlines

- The AONB is highly tranquil, especially along the areas of undeveloped coast. The lowest levels of tranquillity within the AONB occur within the settlement of Southwold. Areas close to Lowestoft, Felixstowe and Woodbridge also have reduced levels of tranquillity.
- A local tranquillity study focused on the Deben Estuary was found to largely be in agreement with the results of the national CPRE tranquillity assessment, although the localised study identified higher levels of tranquillity around the mouth of the River Deben.
- The majority of the AONB is characterised by dark night skies, with the majority of light pollution associated with settlements. A Dark Sky Discovery Site is located at Suffolk Coast National Nature Reserve.
- 14 large scale pylons are located within the AONB.

Analysis of indicator: Levels of tranquillity

- 3.49 The CPRE National Tranquillity mapping produced in 2006 illustrates that Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB exhibits high levels of tranquillity throughout the majority of the AONB (see **Figure 3.13**), with some less tranquil areas around settlements such as Aldeburgh, Southwold and Reydon. Closer to the outskirts of the AONB there are areas with lower tranquillity, particularly in close to large settlements or large roads such as the A14. This is the most current national map of tranquillity¹⁹.
- 3.50 A local level tranquillity model was completed on the Deben Estuary in April 2018²⁰. The model was created using a 50 m grid, showing a finer grain of detail than the 500 m grid in the CPRE National Tranquillity mapping. Levels of tranquillity shown for this area are similar to those across the AONB as a whole, with large areas of high tranquillity and reduced tranquillity around settlements and large roads.

Analysis of indicator: Dark night skies

- 3.51 **Figure 3.14** illustrates the extent of light pollution within the AONB²¹. Most light pollution is concentrated around settlements within the AONB. The large northern section of the AONB has large areas with very low light pollution, any light pollution in the area is concentrated around settlements including Reydon, Southwold, Sizewell (including Sizewell A and B power stations), Leiston, Thorpness, Aldeburgh, Sutton Heath (including MOD Woodbridge), Rendlesham (including Anglia international airport) and the outskirts of Woodbridge. The smaller, southern part of the AONB has higher levels of light pollution, particularly around large settlements including Felixstowe, Harwich and Ipswich. Of the 34 AONBs in England, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB ranks 29th. This ranking is likely due to its proximity to large settlements such as Ipswich and Felixstowe (including very high values associated with the Port of Felixstowe) and does not diminish the importance of the dark night skies in the AONB.

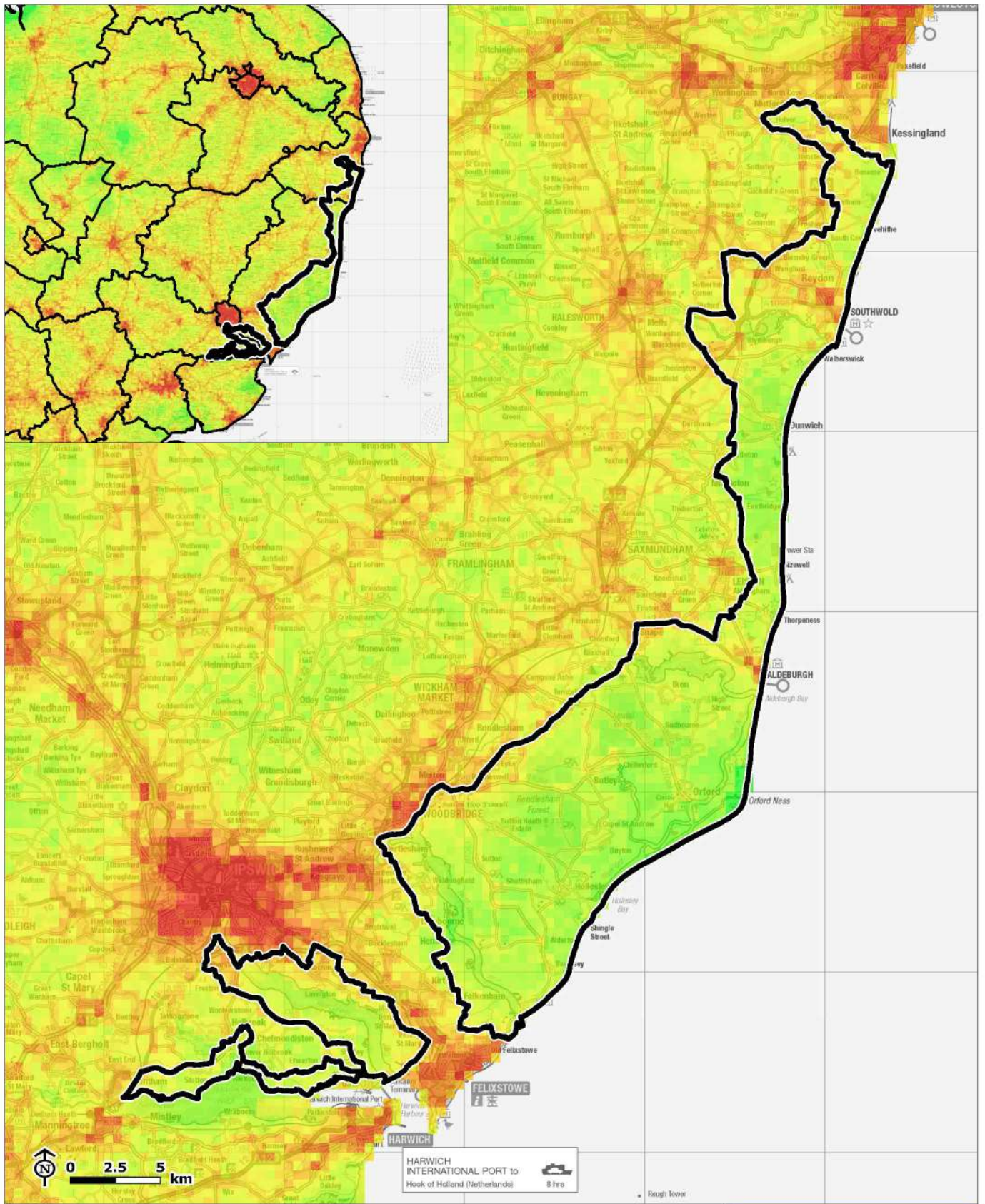
¹⁹ CPRE Tranquillity Map (2006). Accessible online at: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/1839>

²⁰ Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB (2018), Deben Estuary Tranquillity Model Validation Report

²¹ CPRE Night Blight maps (2016). Accessible online at: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

3.52 Suffolk Coast National Nature Reserve is designated as a Dark Sky Discovery Site Milky Way class, meaning the site is dark enough to view the Milky Way with the naked eye on a clear night.²²

²² Dark Sky Discovery (2018), Accessible online at: <http://www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk/dark-sky-discovery-sites/map.html>



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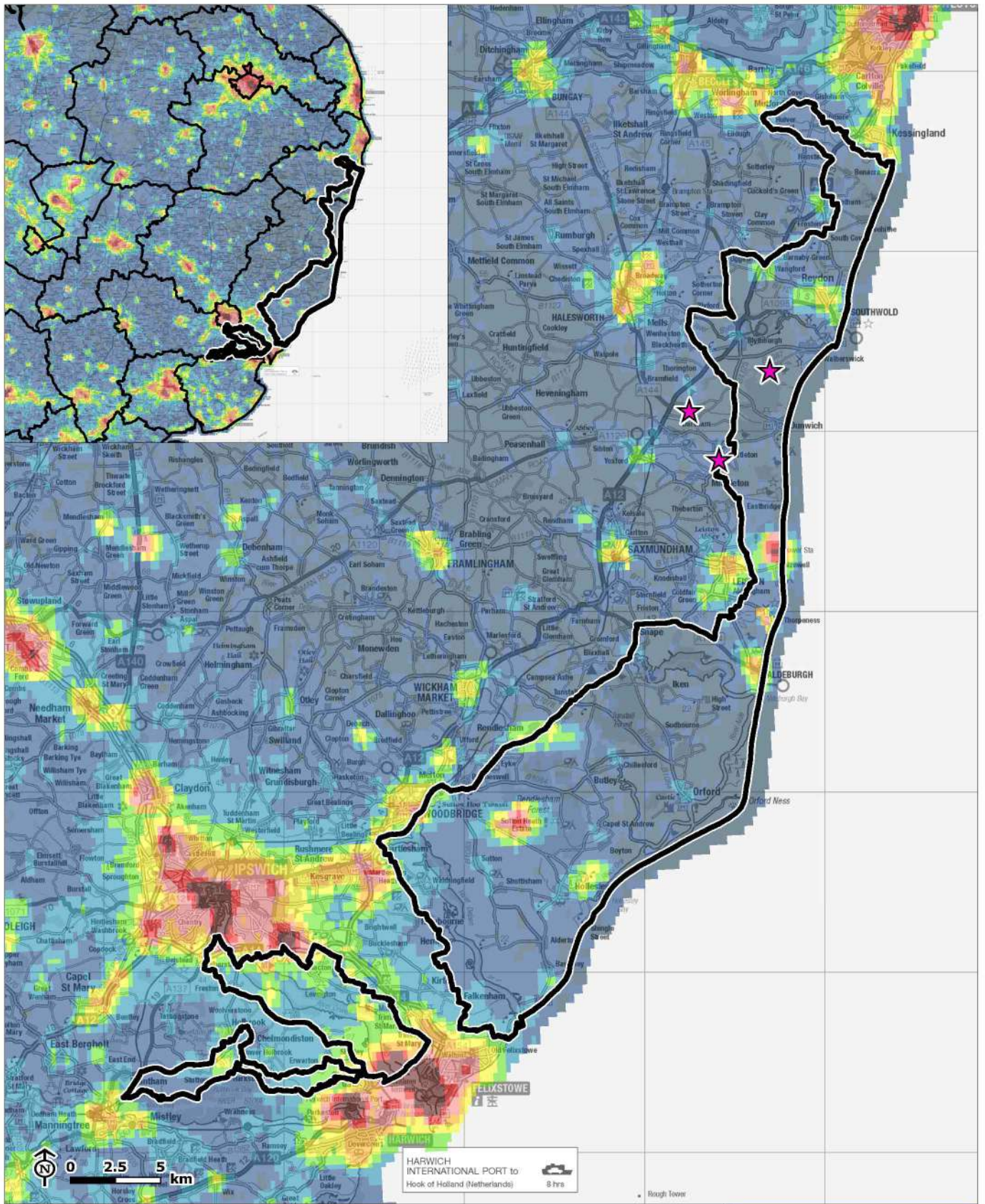
**Figure 3.13: Levels of
Tranquillity**



▭ Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
National Tranquillity Scale
 Most tranquil
 Least tranquil

Source: NE, CPRE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:1,500,000



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**Figure 3.14: Light
Pollution and Dark Sky
Discovery Sites**

- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
 - Dark sky discovery site
- Night Lights**
(NanoWatts / cm² / sr)
- | | | | |
|--|------------|--|--------------|
| | >32 (high) | | < 0.25 (low) |
| | 16 - 32 | | 0.25 - 0.5 |
| | 8 - 16 | | 2 - 4 |
| | 4 - 8 | | 1 - 2 |



Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Analysis of indicator: Number of pylons

- 3.53 Large-scale pylons are visually prominent in the predominantly rural landscape of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. At the time of this report, there are 14 large scale pylons associated with 400kV overhead lines.
- 3.54 New energy infrastructure is likely to be required in the area if the proposed new Sizewell nuclear power station is constructed.

Data sources

- CPRE National Tranquillity mapping, 2006
- Deben Estuary Tranquillity Model Validation Report, 2018
- CPRE Light Pollution and Dark Skies Maps, 2016
- Dark Sky Discovery, 2018. <http://www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk/dark-sky-discovery-sites/map.html>
- National Grid Transmission Network data, 2019

Recommendations

- There is appetite within CPRE and others to re-visit the tranquillity information and it is anticipated that new tranquillity mapping will be available nationally before the next State of the AONB report. Modern techniques and better data availability should allow for more in-depth analysis and trends over time to be seen in greater detail.
- The potential impact of new development and changes of land use on the tranquillity and dark night skies of the AONB should be carefully considered when making planning application decisions. This is a particularly important issue for the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects located within the AONB, including the Sizewell power stations.

4 Biodiversity and geodiversity



4 Biodiversity and geodiversity

Structure of this Chapter

4.1 Biodiversity and geodiversity has been split the following two sub-themes:

- Biodiversity
- Geodiversity

Biodiversity

Indicators selected for this sub-theme

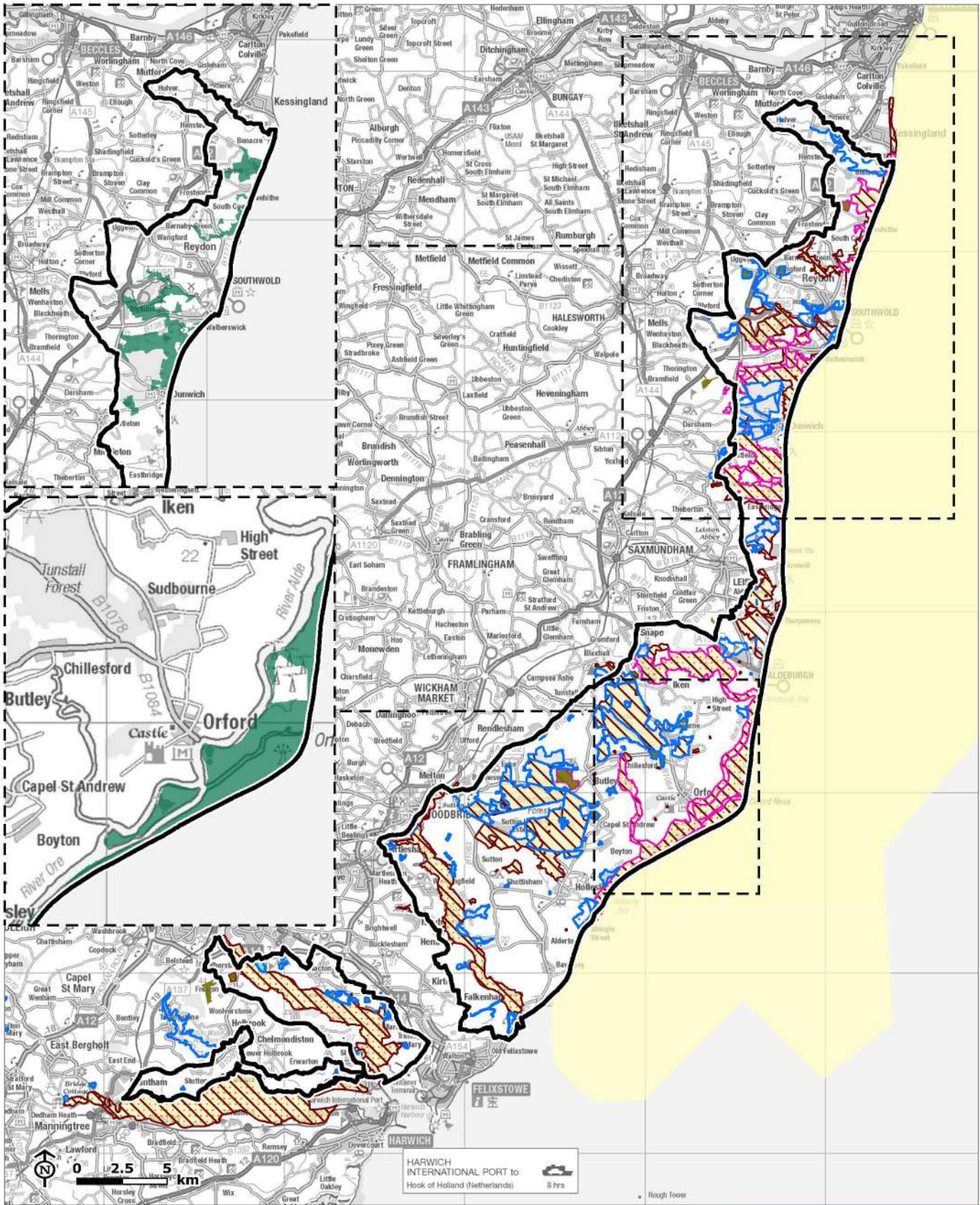
- Biodiversity designation extent
- Biological SSSI condition
- Priority habitat coverage and condition
- Presence and abundance of key species
 - Birds
 - Mammals
 - Reptiles and amphibians
 - Invertebrates

Summary headlines

- 28.7% of the AONB is internationally/nationally designated for its nature conservation importance.
- Of the SSSIs within the AONB, the majority of units are in Unfavourable-Recovering condition (46%) or Favourable condition (41%).
- BAP Priority Habitats are widespread, with 35.2% of the AONB (14,251 hectares) identified as being a priority habitat. The most common BAP Priority Habitat is coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (3,256 ha).

Analysis of indicator: Biodiversity designation extent

- 4.2 The AONB contains extensive stretches of semi-natural habitats which are of international, national and local importance. In particular, the AONB is valued for coastal and estuarine areas which contain important habitats including mudflats, low cliffs, saltmarsh, reedbeds, coastal lagoons and vegetated shingle. Valued habitats located further inland include lowland heathland and woodlands. The National Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and RSPB have an important role in conserving and managing these habitats.
- 4.3 The AONB contains a range of designated sites including four Ramsar Sites, five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), seven Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 36 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), four National Nature Reserves (NNR), two Local Nature Reserves (LNR), and 106 County Wildlife Sites. The spatial distribution of these sites is shown in **Figure 4.1**.
- 4.4 A full list of sites including names, total areas and percentage of area within AONB are shown in **Table 4.1**. Collectively these areas cover 28.7% of the AONB area.



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**Figure 4.1: Nature
Conservation Designations**



- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
- Local Nature Reserve
- National Nature Reserve
- County Wildlife Sites
- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Ramsar Designation
- Special Protection Area
- Ancient woodland

Source: NE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Table 4.1: Designated biological sites in the AONB

| Designation type | Name | Total area (ha) | Total area in AONB (ha) | % of site within AONB | % of AONB within Designation |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Ramsar sites | Alde-Ore Estuary | 2,534.0 | 2,523.7 | 99.6 | 6.2 |
| | Deben Estuary | 981.1 | 972.0 | 99.1 | 2.4 |
| | Minsmere-Walberswick | 1,995.3 | 1,947.3 | 97.6 | 4.8 |
| | Stour and Orwell Estuaries | 3,588.5 | 1,304.8 | 36.4 | 3.2 |
| Special Areas of Conservation | Alde-Ore & Butley Estuaries | 1,632.7 | 1,628.1 | 99.7 | 4.0 |
| | Benacre to Easton Bavents Lagoons | 326.7 | 305.8 | 93.6 | 0.8 |
| | Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths & Marshes | 1,237.8 | 1,189.9 | 96.1 | 2.9 |
| | Orfordness-Shingle Street | 888.0 | 882.3 | 99.4 | 2.2 |
| | Staverton Park & The Thicks, Wantisden | 80.8 | 80.8 | 100.0 | 0.2 |
| Special Protection Areas | Alde-Ore Estuary | 2,403.6 | 2,393.3 | 99.6 | 5.9 |
| | Benacre to Easton Bavents | 470.6 | 448.4 | 95.3 | 1.1 |
| | Deben Estuary | 981.1 | 972.0 | 99.1 | 2.4 |
| | Minsmere-Walberswick | 1,997.1 | 1,949.1 | 97.6 | 4.8 |
| | Sandlings | 3,405.8 | 3,350.7 | 98.4 | 8.3 |
| | Stour and Orwell Estuaries | 3,588.5 | 1,304.8 | 36.4 | 3.2 |
| | Outer Thames Estuary | 393,612.0 | 48.4 | 0.01 | 0.1 |
| Sites of Special Scientific Interest | Alde-Ore Estuary (mixed) | 2,534.0 | 2,523.7 | 99.6 | 6.2 |
| | Blaxhall Heath | 45.9 | 20.4 | 44.4 | 0.1 |
| | Crag Pit, Aldeburgh | 0.2 | 0.2 | 100.0 | 0.1 |
| | Crag Pit, Sutton | 0.7 | 0.7 | 100.0 | 0.1 |
| | Deben Estuary | 981.1 | 972.0 | 99.1 | 2.4 |
| | Freston and Cutler's Woods With Holbrook Park | 12.3 | 12.3 | 100.0 | 0.03 |
| | Iken Wood | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 | 0.1 |
| | Leiston - Aldeburgh | 534.8 | 534.7 | 100.0 | 1.3 |
| | Minsmere-Walberswick Heaths and Marshes | 2,327.0 | 2,211.4 | 95.0 | 5.5 |
| | Nacton Meadows | 4.5 | 2.5 | 56.9 | 0.1 |
| | Orwell Estuary | 1,335.5 | 1,217.1 | 91.1 | 3.0 |
| | Pakefield to Easton Bavents (mixed) | 735.5 | 632.3 | 86.0 | 1.6 |
| | Potton Hall Fields, Westleton | 16.7 | 16.7 | 100.0 | 0.04 |
| | Sandlings Forest | 2,474.6 | 2,454.3 | 99.2 | 6.1 |
| | Sizewell Marshes | 105.4 | 105.4 | 100.0 | 0.3 |
| | Snape Warren | 48.0 | 48.0 | 100.0 | 0.1 |
| | Staverton Park and The Thicks, Wantisden | 80.8 | 80.8 | 100.0 | 0.2 |
| | Stour Estuary (mixed) | 2,163.9 | 87.9 | 4.1 | 0.2 |
| | Sutton and Hollesley Heaths | 483.3 | 483.3 | 100.0 | 1.2 |
| | Tunstall Common | 36.6 | 36.6 | 100.0 | 0.1 |
| National Nature Reserves | Benacre | 372.2 | 360.7 | 96.9 | 0.9 |
| | Orfordness-Havergate | 903.8 | 903.6 | 100.0 | 2.2 |
| | Suffolk Coast ²³ | 981.7 | 974.1 | 99.2 | 2.4 |
| | Westleton Heath | 47.6 | 47.6 | 100.0 | 0.1 |
| Local Nature Reserves | Bridge Wood | 31.0 | 29.2 | 94.2 | 0.1 |
| | The Haven, Aldeburgh | 20.2 | 20.2 | 100.0 | 0.05 |

Source: Natural England GIS data (downloaded 2018). Note that Sites of Special Scientific Interest marked as 'mixed' are those which have been designated for the presence of both ecological and geological features.

Analysis of indicator: Biological SSSI condition

- 4.5 The map at **Figure 4.2** shows the condition of the units within the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Please note that the map shows both biological and geological SSSI units. The condition of geological SSSI units is discussed in more detail in paragraph 4.26.
- 4.6 The majority of units in biological SSSIs in the AONB are in 'unfavourable-recovering' (45.8%) condition. 40.3% of SSSI units are in 'favourable' condition.

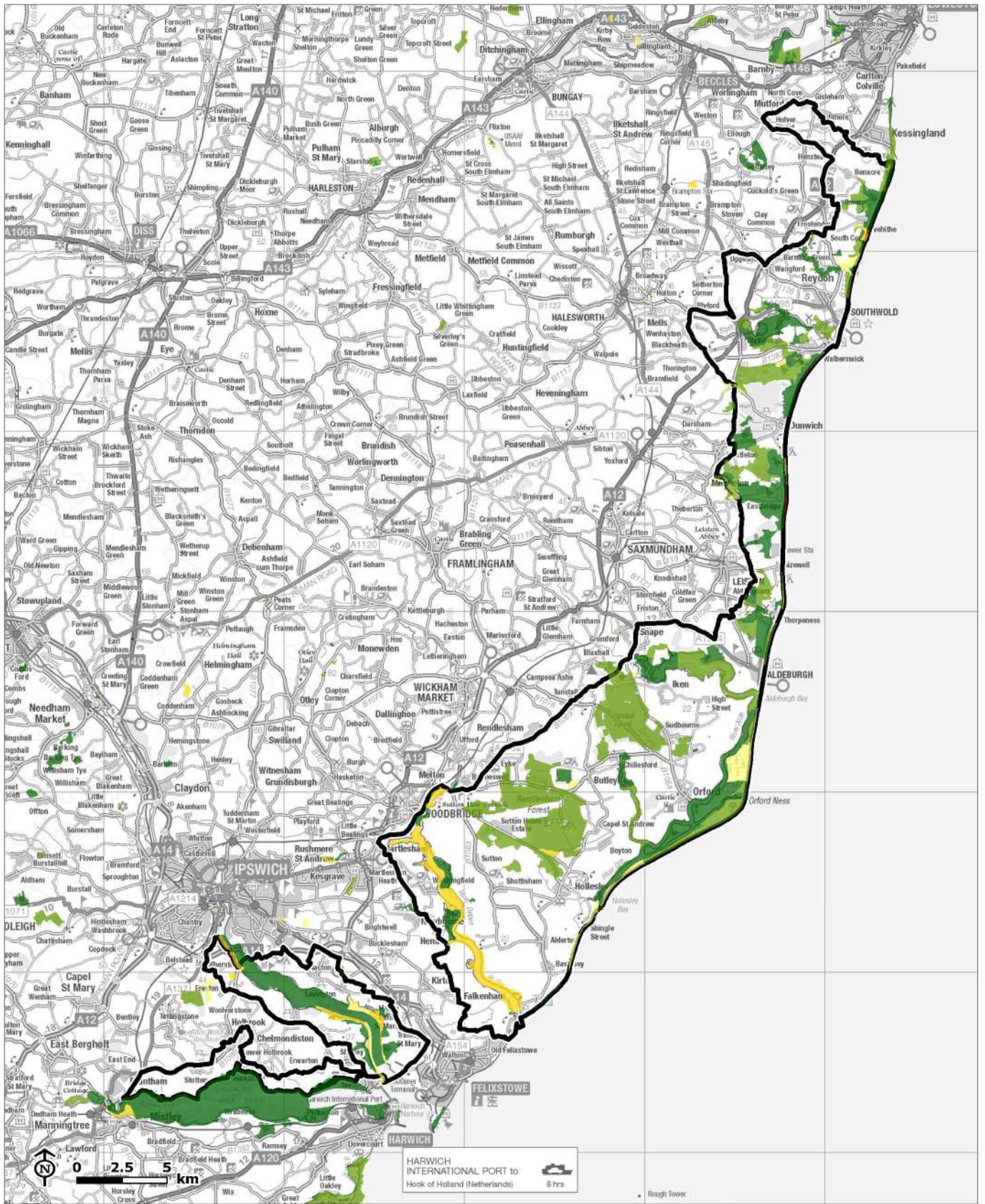
²³ Approximately 326.90 hectares of Suffolk Coast NNR ceased to be managed as an NNR in December 2018.

4.7 The following management techniques have contributed to the favourable or recovering condition of biological SSSIs:

- Bracken control in shrub lowland habitats and heather cutting and sheep grazing in dwarf shrub heath habitats, has improved SSSI condition in Sutton and Hollesley Heaths.
- The control of invasive trees and bracken has improved conditions of dwarf shrub lowland in Tunstall Common SSSI.
- Scrub management in dwarf shrub heath habitats at Snape Warren SSSI and in Acid grassland at Leiston-Aldeburgh SSSI. Grazing or spraying keeps the area open and supports more diverse wildlife.
- Littoral and sublittoral sediment areas not backed by sea walls are generally in better condition as they are not subject to coastal squeeze.
- Predator fencing to minimise fox predation of breeding birds in neutral grassland habitats in Alde-Ore Estuary SSSI.
- Management of trampling with roping as an exclusion zone in sublittoral sediment habitats at Leiston-Aldeburgh SSSI.

4.8 8.4% of biological SSSI units in the AONB are in 'unfavourable-declining' condition, 5.3% are in 'unfavourable - no change' condition, 0.05% is 'partially destroyed' and 0.03% is 'destroyed'. Key reoccurring reasons for unfavourable condition are as follows:

- Over three quarters (77% or 754 ha) of Deben Estuary SSSI are in an 'unfavourable - declining' condition. This is largely due to the coastal squeeze of littoral sediment habitats as the habitat cannot retreat further inland as it is constrained by a coastal defence.
- The whole of Inken Wood SSSI is in an 'unfavourable - no change' condition because of the impacts of browsing and dense bracken growth in this mixed woodland habitat.
- 12 ha of Pakefield to Easton Bavents SSSI is in an 'unfavourable - no change' condition. Reasons for this include agricultural run-off and decline in species numbers of breeding birds in inshore sublittoral sediment habitats. 'Partially destroyed' habitats include 3 ha of bracken habitat.



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Figure 4.2: SSSI Condition

- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
- SSSI Condition**
- Favourable
- Unfavourable recovering
- Unfavourable no change
- Unfavourable declining
- Part destroyed
- Destroyed



Source: NE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Analysis of indicator: Priority habitat coverage

- 4.9 **Table 4.2:** shows the coverage of the various BAP Priority Habitats within the AONB. These are also shown spatially in the map at **Figure 4.3**.

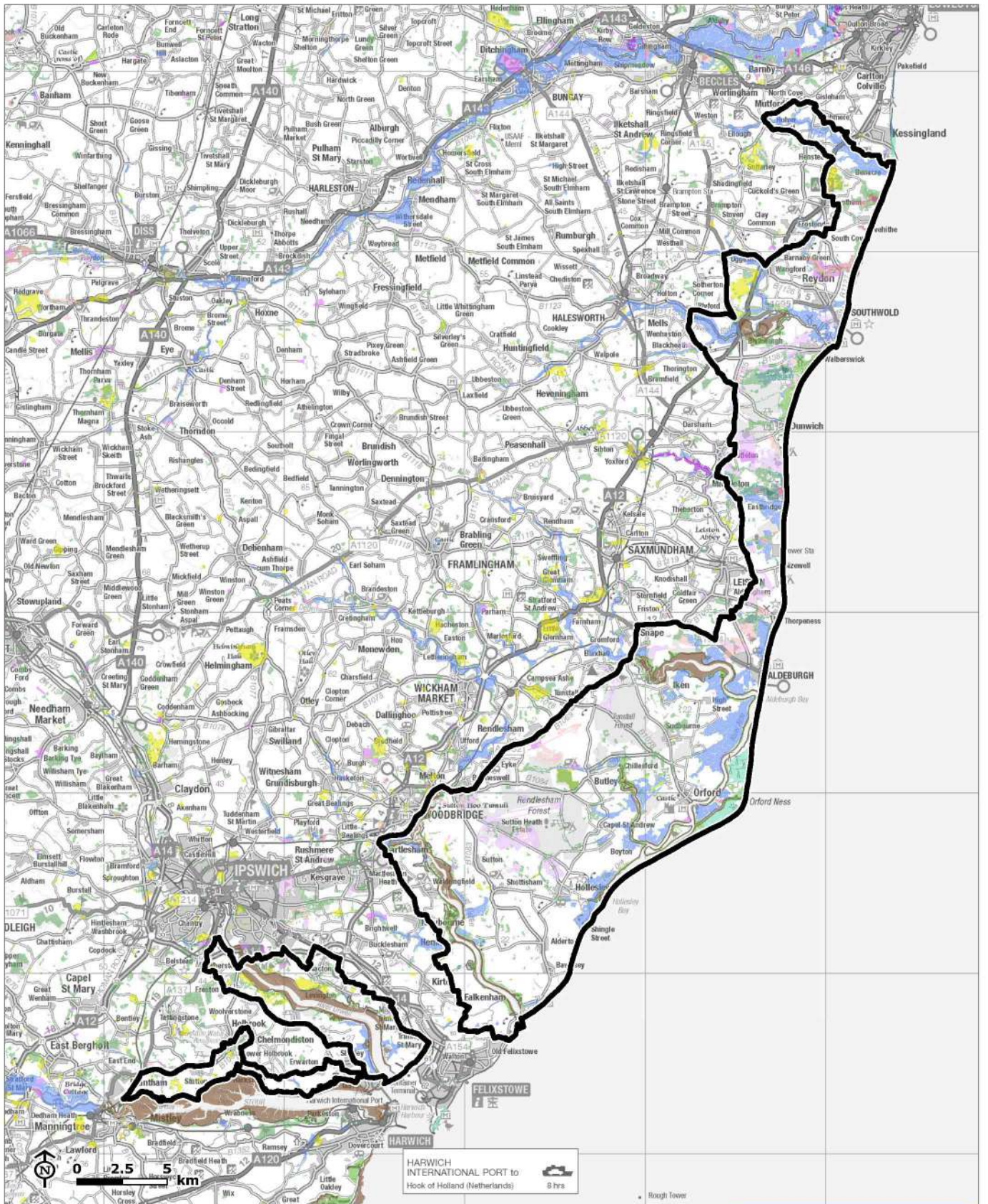
Table 4.2: BAP Priority habitats type and area

| Priority Habitat type | Area (ha) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh | 3,256.0 |
| Coastal saltmarsh | 1,044.8 |
| Coastal sand dunes | 35.6 |
| Coastal vegetated shingle | 568.3 |
| Deciduous woodland | 2,555.2 |
| Good quality semi-improved grassland | 211.1 |
| Lowland dry acid grassland | 400.6 |
| Lowland fens | 159.4 |
| Lowland heathland | 1,295.1 |
| Lowland meadows | 14.1 |
| Maritime cliff and slope | 49.7 |
| Mudflats | 1,596.8 |
| No main habitat but additional habitats present | 2,630.0 |
| Purple moor grass and rush pastures | 2.9 |
| Reedbeds | 354.5 |
| Saline lagoons | 73.5 |
| Traditional orchard | 3.6 |
| Total | 14,251.2 |

Source: Natural England Priority habitats GIS data (downloaded 2018)

- 4.10 The most abundant priority habitat type is coastal and floodplain and grazing marsh, covering 8% of the total AONB area (3,256 ha). Other common priority habitat types within the AONB include deciduous woodland (6.3%), mudflats (3.9%), lowland heathland (3.2%) and coastal saltmarsh (2.6%). The spatial distribution of priority habitats can be seen in **Figure 4.3**.
- 4.11 Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB supports 8.7% of all lowland heathland in AONBs, despite only 2% of the AONB area being this habitat type²⁴. It is the fourth most expansive area of this habitat in an AONB after Dorset, Cornwall and the Surrey Hills AONBs.

²⁴Natural England, 2017. Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes (MEOPL),



- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
- Priority Habitat Inventory**
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Coastal saltmarsh
- Coastal sand dunes
- Coastal vegetated shingle
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland

- Lowland fens
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- Maritime cliff and slope
- Mudflats
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures
- Reedbeds
- Saline lagoons
- Traditional orchard
- Wood pasture and parkland

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**Figure 4.3: Distribution of
BAP Priority Habitats**



Source: NE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Analysis of indicator: Presence and abundance of key species

Mammals

- 4.12 There are a number of protected terrestrial mammals which have been recorded in the AONB between 2008 and 2017. These species include the European otter, European water vole, hazel dormouse, brown hare, and three different pipistrelle bat species. The number of recordings per year and number of locations the species have been recorded in are listed in **Table 4.3**. An additional 60 unidentified pipistrelle species bats were recorded in the ten year period (2008-2017).

Table 4.3: Records of mammal species in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB from 2008 to 2017

| Species | | Year | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| European otter | N of locations | 19 | 11 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 2 |
| | N of records | 33 | 19 | 18 | 23 | 6 | 13 | 9 | 15 | 14 | 4 |
| European Water Vole | N of locations | 12 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 6 |
| | N of records | 53 | 16 | 21 | 44 | 4 | 3 | 11 | 18 | 27 | 6 |
| Hazel Dormouse | N of locations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | N of records | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Brown hare | N of locations | 10 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 12 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 16 | 9 |
| | N of records | 13 | 10 | 17 | 10 | 21 | 12 | 23 | 56 | 32 | 10 |
| Common Pipistrelle | N of locations | 1 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 24 | 8 | 12 | 6 |
| | N of records | 1 | 1 | 9 | 24 | 2 | 11 | 63 | 13 | 21 | 18 |
| Nathusius's Pipistrelle | N of locations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| | N of records | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Soprano Pipistrelle | N of locations | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 20 | 7 | 8 | 3 |
| | N of records | 2 | 1 | 8 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 40 | 17 | 15 | 13 |

Source: Suffolk Biodiversity Records Centre (2018)

Bird species

- 4.13 Notable bird species recorded in the AONB by the Biodiversity Records Centre are shown in **Table 4.4**. Between 2015 and 2016 the number of records of Bittern, Cuckoo and Song Thrush all doubled and many other species experienced an increase. However, records for 2017 are considerably lower, this may be a reflection of incomplete datasets or survey effort.

Table 4.4: Records of bird species in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB from 2008 to 2017

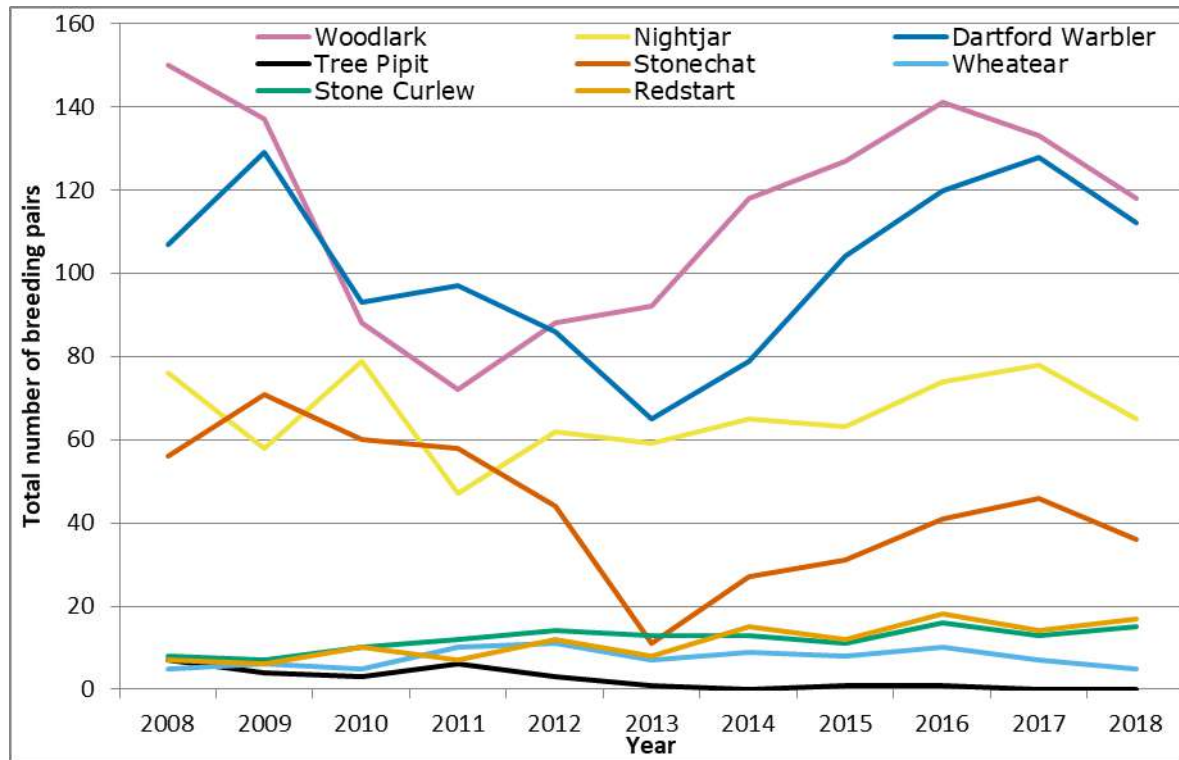
| Species | | Year | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Bittern | N of locations | 4 | 4 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 14 | 23 | 3 |
| | N of records | 4 | 8 | 13 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 24 | 54 | 10 |
| Blue-headed Wagtail | N of locations | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 0 |
| | N of records | 4 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 0 |
| Cuckoo | N of locations | 25 | 29 | 25 | 40 | 19 | 17 | 18 | 36 | 60 | 3 |
| | N of records | 27 | 38 | 35 | 50 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 51 | 100 | 3 |
| Grey Partridge | N of locations | 6 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 0 |
| | N of records | 7 | 14 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 0 |
| Grey-headed Wagtail | N of locations | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| | N of records | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| Skylark | N of locations | 20 | 25 | 24 | 40 | 11 | 21 | 41 | 53 | 83 | 6 |
| | N of records | 24 | 36 | 37 | 48 | 13 | 25 | 48 | 87 | 161 | 6 |
| Song Thrush | N of locations | 19 | 29 | 31 | 38 | 8 | 17 | 27 | 39 | 69 | 2 |
| | N of records | 21 | 50 | 42 | 45 | 8 | 19 | 27 | 54 | 117 | 2 |
| Yellow Wagtail | N of locations | 17 | 11 | 13 | 27 | 8 | 16 | 9 | 24 | 26 | 1 |
| | N of records | 19 | 12 | 20 | 33 | 8 | 25 | 10 | 29 | 48 | 1 |

Source: Suffolk Biodiversity Records Centre (2018)

Breeding Birds

- 4.14 The RSPB has monitored a selection of notable (Red and Amber listed) bird species within the Suffolk Coast RSPB Reserves, this data has identified the following breeding population trends between 2008 and 2018;
- Numbers of booming male Bitterns and nesting female Bitterns have generally increased.
 - The total number of fledged Marsh Harrier chicks has fluctuated but followed a decreasing trend the number has dropped by 34.6% since 2008.
 - Avocets in Minsmere have remained stable.
 - Lapwing populations have remained stable.
 - There have been no major changes in Redshank breeding pairs.
 - The numbers of breeding pairs of Little Tern has dropped considerably, with none being recorded since 2011, compared to 41 in Minsmere Reserve, 3 in Dingle Reserve and 12 in Mingle Reserve.
 - Breeding pairs of Nightingale have increased in some reserves and reduced in others.
 - The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) estimated that the county of Suffolk held the second highest proportion (17%) of the UK's breeding population of turtle doves in the UK. Minsmere is noted as one of the best places to see turtle doves in England.
- 4.15 The Suffolk Sandlings are key heathland habitats within the AONB (largely designated as the Sandlings Special Protection Area (SPA) or Minsmere to Walberswick (SPA), including RSPB, National Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the Forestry Commission land holdings). A selection of protected breeding bird species have been monitored between 2008 and 2018 by the RSPB, as shown in **Figure 4.4**. Multiple species including woodlark, Nightjar and Redstart experienced breeding population drop in 2011, and there was an additional drop in 2013 for Dartford Warbler, Redstart and Stonechat. Generally since 2013 most of the monitored species experienced increasing breeding populations, although there has been a drop for many between 2017 and 2018.

Figure 4.4: Abundance of breeding pairs of heathland species in the Suffolk Sandlings between 2008 and 2018



Data source: RSPB (2018). Data refers to a section of notable species monitored within the Suffolk Sandlings.

Reptiles

- 4.16 Three out of the UK's six reptile species occur within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and have been recorded frequently between 2008 and 2017, as shown in **Table 4.5**. All three species have been recorded in a variety of locations with grass snakes recorded as present in 22 locations in 2011.

Table 4.5: Records of reptile species in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB from 2008 to 2017

| Species | | Year | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Adder | N of locations | 12 | 11 | 13 | 20 | 7 | 12 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 2 |
| | N of records | 25 | 31 | 34 | 56 | 16 | 20 | 27 | 15 | 11 | 5 |
| Grass Snake | N of locations | 11 | 11 | 15 | 22 | 8 | 15 | 10 | 16 | 12 | 12 |
| | N of records | 22 | 31 | 26 | 38 | 10 | 25 | 19 | 21 | 17 | 17 |
| Slow-worm | N of locations | 6 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 3 | 12 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 1 |
| | N of records | 8 | 8 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 20 | 7 | 14 | 17 | 1 |

Source: Suffolk Biodiversity Records Centre (2018)

Amphibians

- 4.17 Amphibians recorded in the AONB between 2008 and 2018 include the Common toad and Great Crested Newt. Records of Great Crested Newt are sporadic with one in 2008 at Bentwaters and one in 2017 at Waldringfield. However, this may be a reflection of survey efforts rather than actual abundance.

Table 4.6: Records of amphibian species in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB from 2008 to 2017

| Species | | Year | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Common Toad | N of locations | 5 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | N of records | 5 | 8 | 8 | 22 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Great Crested Newt | N of locations | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | N of records | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

Source: Suffolk Biodiversity Records Centre (2018)

Fish

- 4.18 The European Eel has been sporadically recorded in the AONB between 2008 and 2018 including one record in 2011 at Wangford, two recordings on 2011 from Brantham and Martlesham and a further recording two recordings in 2016 from Bulcamp Marshes and Wangford.

Insects

- 4.19 The stag beetle is protected under national and international regulations and has been recorded in AONB numerous times as shown in **Table 4.7**.

Table 4.7: Records of stag beetles in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB from 2008 to 2017

| Species | | Year | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Stag Beetle | N of locations | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 14 | 2 |
| | N of records | 1 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 31 | 8 |

Source: Suffolk Biodiversity Records Centre (2018)

Analysis of indicator: Area of semi-natural habitat managed under agri-environment schemes

- 4.20 Agri-environment schemes provide a key source of funding for the management of semi-natural habitats. The following areas of semi-natural habitat are managed as part of Environmental Stewardship Schemes:
- 846 hectares of lowland heathland (2% of the AONB) is managed as part of an Environmental Stewardship Scheme. The majority (494 ha) is managed under option HO1: Maintenance of lowland heathland.
 - 1,617 hectares of the AONB (4%) is managed for the benefit of low input grassland. The majority (941 ha) is managed under option EK3: Permanent grassland with very low inputs.
- 4.21 Equivalent data of areas of semi-natural habitat managed as part of Countryside Stewardship agreements is not currently available.

Data sources

- Natural England GIS data:
 - Priority Habitats Inventory
- Natural England, Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL) (2017 and 2018).
- Suffolk Ornithologist's Group (2018), Suffolk Birds Vol. 67: A review of birds in Suffolk in 2017. Suffolk Naturalist's Society.

- Suffolk Biodiversity Records Centre

Recommendations

- National and local biodiversity and geodiversity data should be collected and analysed every five years through State of the AONB Reporting to enable change over time to be monitored for the headline indicators.
- The AONB should explore a Service Level Agreement with the Suffolk Biodiversity Records Centre to obtain comparable species data every five years for the purposes of monitoring trends in the AONB.

Geodiversity

Indicators selected for this sub-theme

- Extent of geological designations
- Condition of geological SSSIs

Summary headlines

- There are 16 SSSIs in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB that are identified for their geological features, including three which are designated for both geological and biological value.
- 88% of geological SSSI units were in a good or recovering condition (favourable or unfavourable recovering) in 2017.

Analysis of indicator: Extent of geological designations

4.22 The AONB contains a range of designated sites including:

- Geological SSSIs
- Suffolk GeoSites

Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs)

4.23 A full list of geological SSSI sites including their names, total areas and percentage of their extent within AONB is shown in **Table 4.9**.

4.24 Within Suffolk Coast & Heaths SSSI there are a total of 16 geological SSSIs (of which 3 are mixed geological and biological SSSIs), collectively these have 56 units²⁵. These units exhibit a variety of geological features including active and static geomorphological and coastal features.

Suffolk GeoSites

4.25 The AONB also contains a total of 17 County GeoSites. The combined area of these is 27.8 ha. Details of these sites are contained within **Table 4.9**.

²⁵ Natural England, 2017. Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes (MEOPL),

Table 4.9: Designated geological sites in the AONB

| Designation type | Name | Total area (ha) | Total area in AONB (ha) | % of site within AONB |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Site of Special Scientific Interest | Aldeburgh Brick Pit | 0.9 | 0.9 | 100.0 |
| | Aldeburgh Hall Pit | 1.0 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| | Alde-Ore Estuary (Mixed) | 2,534.0 | 2,523.7 | 99.6 |
| | Bawdsey Cliff | 17.4 | 17.4 | 100.0 |
| | Buckanay Farm Pit, Alderton | 0.7 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| | Chillesford Church Pit | 1.1 | 1.1 | 100.0 |
| | Crag Farm Pit, Sudbourne | 4.8 | 4.8 | 100.0 |
| | Ferry Cliff, Sutton | 2.8 | 2.8 | 100.0 |
| | Gedgrave Hall Pit | 0.6 | 0.6 | 100.0 |
| | Neutral Farm Pit, Butley | 1.1 | 1.1 | 100.0 |
| | Pakefield to Easton Bavents (Mixed) | 735.5 | 632.3 | 86.0 |
| | Ramsholt Cliff | 2.1 | 2.1 | 100.0 |
| | Red House Farm Pit, Sudbourne | 0.5 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| | Richmond Farm Pit, Gedgrave | 0.6 | 0.6 | 100.0 |
| | Rockhall Wood Pit, Sutton | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| | Round Hill Pit, Aldeburgh | 0.5 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| | Stour Estuary (Mixed) | 2,163.9 | 87.9 | 4.1 |
| | Sudbourne Park Pit | 1.1 | 1.1 | 100.0 |
| | Valley Farm Pit, Sudbourne | 0.5 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| County Geosites | Sutton Church | 0.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| | Chillesford Church | 0.02 | 0.02 | 100.0 |
| | Wantisden Church | 0.03 | 0.03 | 100.0 |
| | Nacton Cliff | 3.0 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
| | Thorpeness Cliff | 1.9 | 1.9 | 100.0 |
| | Orwell Country Park (Bridge Wood) | 4.2 | 4.2 | 100.0 |
| | Westleton Heath Pit | 1.2 | 1.2 | 100.0 |
| | Newbourne Great Pit | 0.2 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| | Butley Forest Pit | 2.1 | 2.1 | 100.0 |
| | Dunwich St James Church complex | 0.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| | Harkstead cliff and shore | 9.4 | 9.4 | 100.0 |
| | Orford Castle | 0.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| | Orford Castle Pit | 0.1 | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| | St Helena/Es Walks | 0.6 | 0.6 | 100.0 |
| | Thorpe Ness | 3.3 | 3.3 | 100.0 |
| | Dunwich Heath Cliff | 0.9 | 0.9 | 100.0 |
| Dunwich Cliffs | 0.6 | 0.6 | 100.0 | |

Source: Natural England Biodiversity GIS data and Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service GIS data. Note that Sites of Special Scientific Interest marked as 'mixed' are those which have been designated for the presence of both ecological and geological features.

Analysis of indicator: Geological SSSI condition

4.26 In 2017 88% of geological SSSI units within Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB were in a positive condition, with 78% in 'favourable' condition and 10% in 'unfavourable-recovering' condition (as shown in **Figure 4.2**). The following management techniques have resulted in good or recovering condition:

- Clearance of vegetation on geological SSSI sites such as Rockhall Wood Pit SSSI.
- Removal of spoil obscuring the features of interest at Valley Farm Pit SSSI.
- Round Hill Pit SSSI is in a favourable condition thanks to works completed as part of a project in 2002 which cleared exposure features and improved site accessibility.

4.27 5% of geological SSSI units are in 'unfavourable-no change' condition and 7% are assessed as 'unfavourable-declining'. There are no areas which have been destroyed. The following management issues impact on the condition of these SSSIs:

- The whole of Neutral Farm Pit SSSI is in 'unfavourable-declining' condition due to the site becoming overgrown and the main cross-bedding rock exposures are covered by scrub/vegetation.
- The whole area of Aldeburgh Brick Pit is in 'unfavourable-no change' condition because of the presence of fly tipping and landfilling.
- Sudbourne Park Pit SSSI is in 'unfavourable-declining' condition because of a build-up of shrub vegetation which obscuring the visibility of exposures.
- The whole of Neutral Farm Pit, Butley SSSI is deemed to be in 'unfavourable-declining' condition due overgrown scrub obscuring the exposure and blocking access routes.

Data sources

- Natural England GIS data (downloaded 2018):
 - SSSI
- Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service GIS data:
 - Suffolk GeoSites

Recommendations

- National and local data on geological features should be collected and analysed every five years through State of the AONB reporting. This will allow for change over time to be monitored for the headline indicators.

5 Historic Environment



5 Historic Environment

Indicators selected for this theme

- 5.1 The indicators selected for monitoring the 'Historic Environment' theme are as follows:
- Number and area covered by Scheduled Monuments
 - Number and area covered by Registered Parks and Gardens
 - Number and classification of Listed Buildings
 - Number and extent of Conservation Areas
 - Condition of archaeological features (Heritage at Risk)
 - Number and location of locally important archaeological sites/features listed on the Historic Environment Register (HER)
 - Management of archaeological/historic features through agri-environment schemes
- 5.2 There are no World Heritage Sites or Registered Battlefields in the AONB. There is one Protected Wreck located near the coast, but outside of the boundary of the AONB. Dunwich Bank Protected Wreck is located near Minsmere Haven.

Summary headlines

- There are 39 Scheduled Monuments within the AONB which cover a total area of 77 hectares.
- There are two Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens in the AONB; covering a total of 383.9 hectares.
- The AONB contains 677 Listed Buildings; 17 Grade I, 43 Grade II* and 617 Grade II.
- 11 Conservation Areas are located wholly or partially within the AONB and cover a total area of 459.1 hectares.
- There are a total of 5,148 HER records within the AONB.
- Ten heritage features within the AONB are on the Heritage at Risk Register. Frequent issues relating to the condition and management of heritage features include arable ploughing and decay/lack of maintenance.
- 316.2 hectares (1%) of the AONB is managed for archaeological/historic features through agri-environment schemes.

Analysis of indicator: Number and area covered by Scheduled Monuments

- 5.3 There are 39 Scheduled Monuments wholly or partially within the AONB; these are listed in **Table 5.1** below and shown spatially in **Figure 5.1**. The largest Scheduled Monument is the *Rectilinear enclosures 1km SW of Boyton Hall Farm* (17.22 ha). 14 of the Scheduled Monuments are bowl barrows which are found in numerous locations throughout the AONB. There is also a string of Martello towers, small 19th century defensive forts along the coast from Old Felixstowe to Aldeburgh which indicate the past importance of the coast for defensive purposes. *Orford Castle* Scheduled Monument includes the 12th century tower keep as well as the buried remains of associated structures.

Table 5.1: Name and area of Scheduled Monuments within the AONB

| Name of Scheduled Monument | Area (ha) |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Martello tower at Felixstowe ferry | 0.03 |
| Martello tower at Rose Cottage | 0.04 |
| Blythburgh Priory | 0.7 |

| Name of Scheduled Monument | Area (ha) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Settlement site E of the Cedars | 8.3 |
| Moated site in Moatyard Covert | 0.4 |
| Enclosure E of Nether Hall | 8.6 |
| Maison Dieu (or Hospital of the Holy Trinity), Dunwich | 0.2 |
| Settlement sites 330yds (300m) NW of Walnut Tree Farm | 5.2 |
| Rectilinear enclosures 1km SW of Boyton Hall Farm | 17.2 |
| Martello tower SE of Buckanay Farm | 0.04 |
| Martello tower by Bawdsey Beach | 0.04 |
| Long barrow on Sutton Common | 0.1 |
| Chapel of St James' Leper Hospital, Dunwich | 0.02 |
| Martello tower at Shingle Street | 0.3 |
| Martello tower on golf course adjoining Woodbridge Haven | 0.03 |
| Greyfriars, Dunwich | 3.4 |
| Church Common round barrows | 0.1 |
| Slaughden Martello tower | 0.7 |
| Prehistoric settlement and group of barrows (including site of ship burial) at Sutton Hoo | 8.0 |
| Two bowl barrows in Rendlesham Forest, 285m north west of Manor Cottage | 0.05 |
| Cumberland's Mount medieval earthwork in Staverton Park | 1.0 |
| Two bowl barrows in Square Plantation | 0.2 |
| Bowl barrow in Tunstall Forest, 900m west of Blacklands Farm | 0.1 |
| Bowl barrow west of Fen Covert, 305m south of Fen Cottage | 0.1 |
| Bowl barrow on Tinker's Walks, 950m WSW of Eastwoodlodge Farm | 0.2 |
| Bowl barrow on Tinker's Walks, 740m west of Eastwoodlodge Farm | 0.1 |
| Bowl barrow on Iken Heath, 620m north of Fazeboons | 0.1 |
| Bowl barrow in Tunstall Forest, 1300m south of Heath Cottages | 0.1 |
| Bowl barrow on Aldringham Common, 300m east of Stone House | 0.1 |
| Bowl barrow 250m south-west of Tangham Cottages in Tangham Forest | 0.1 |
| Orford Castle with adjoining quarry and remains of 20th century look-out post | 3.4 |
| Leiston Abbey (first site) with later chapel and pill box | 8.9 |
| Bowl barrow and adjacent section of a boundary bank in Rendlesham Forest, 1400m west of Valley Farm | 0.1 |
| Bowl barrow in Tunstall Forest, 525m SSE of Fourwinds | 0.04 |
| Five bowl barrows 490m and 500m north west of Bussock Barn | 0.2 |
| Henge and associated barrow cemetery south of Home Whin Farm | 8.2 |
| Bowl barrow in Tunstall Forest, 950m north west of Heath Cottages | 0.05 |
| Orford Ness: the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment test buildings and associated structures | 1.0 |
| Anti-aircraft site at Searson's Farm, Trimley St Mary | 0.2 |
| Total | 77.64 |

Source: Historic England Scheduled Monuments data (2018).

Analysis of indicator: Number and area covered by Registered Parks and Gardens

- 5.4 There are two Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens in the AONB. The location of the Registered Parks and Gardens can be seen in **Figure 5.1**.
- **Henham Registered Park and Garden** (324.5 ha) is located near Blytheburgh on the eastern edge of the AONB. Henham Park and Garden includes the remains of a pleasure ground. A large hall was built on the site in 1528 and was re-built after being lost to a fire in 1773.
 - **Bawdsey Manor Registered Park and Garden** (59.4 ha) is located close to the mouth of the River Deben. It is characterised by a series of gardens dating from 1885, including an artificial Pulhamite cliff.

Analysis of indicator: Number and classification of Listed Buildings

- 5.5 There are 677 Listed Buildings in the AONB; 17 are Grade I listed, 43 are Grade II* listed and 617 are Grade II listed. There are clusters of Listed Buildings in and around the Southwold Conservation Area, Aldeburgh Conservation Area, Orford Conservation Area and the Royal Hospital School in Holbrook. The locations and grades of Listed Buildings can be seen in **Figure 5.1**.

Analysis of indicator: Number and extent of Conservation Areas

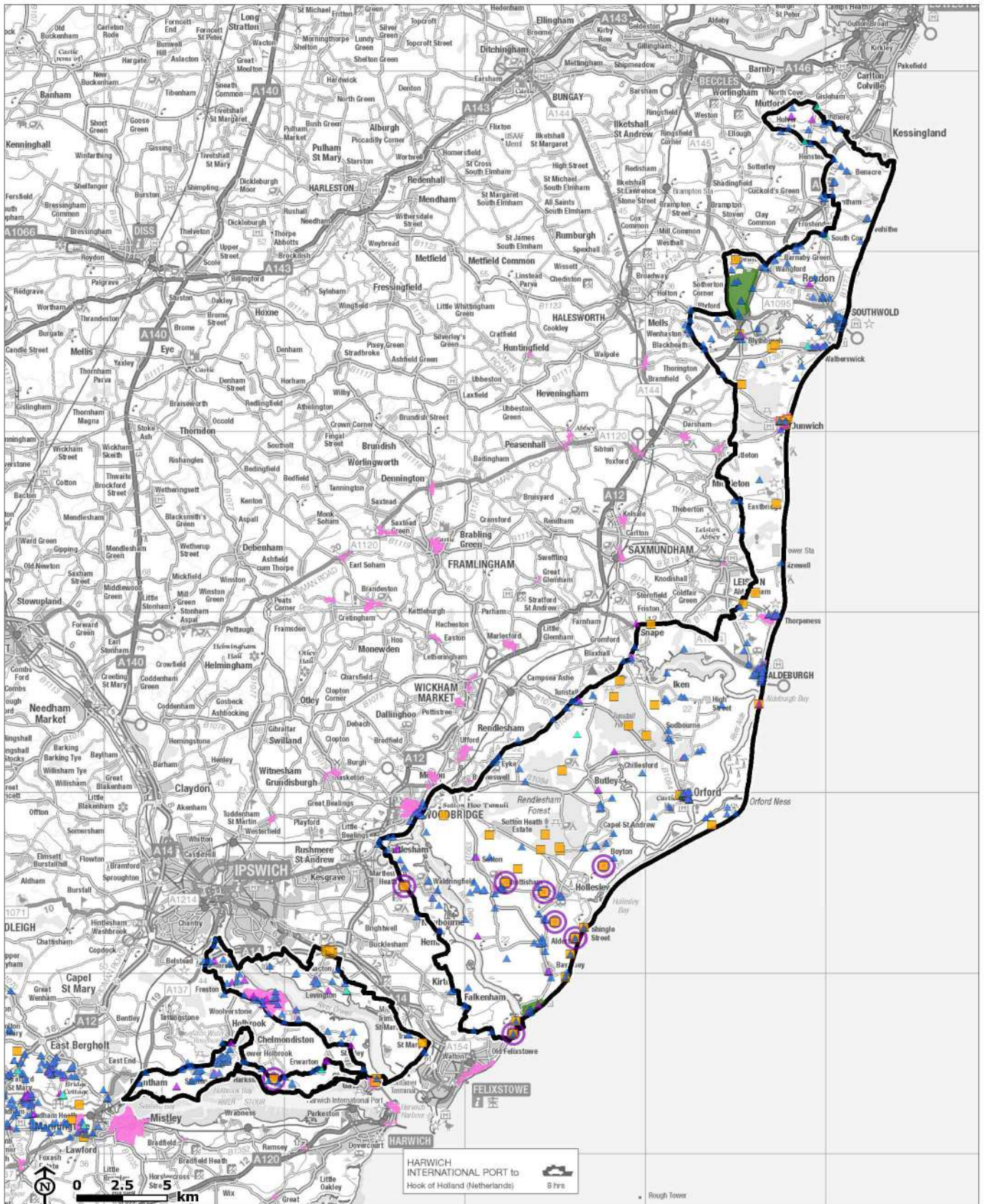
- 5.6 There are 11 Conservation Areas wholly or partially within the AONB. The spatial extent of these can be seen on **Figure 5.1**. **Table 5.2** contains the total area covered by the designation and the percentage of each area which falls within the boundary of the AONB. 459.1 hectares of the AONB forms part of a Conservation Area.

Table 5.2: Conservation Areas within Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

| Name of Conservation Area | Total area (ha) | Area within AONB (ha) | % Area within AONB |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Pin Mill (Chelmondiston) | 5.6 | 5.6 | 100.0 |
| Woolverstone | 213.4 | 200.4 | 93.9 |
| Dunwich | 59.7 | 59.7 | 100.0 |
| Thorpeness | 51.8 | 51.8 | 100.0 |
| Woodbridge | 103.1 | 3.8 | 3.7 |
| Walberswick | 24.2 | 24.2 | 100.0 |
| Snape | 11.2 | 8.6 | 76.4 |
| Shottisham | 16.5 | 16.5 | 100.0 |
| Blythburgh | 19.7 | 19.7 | 100.0 |
| Aldeburgh | 29.4 | 29.4 | 100.0 |
| Orford | 39.6 | 39.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 574.2 | 459.3 | |

Source: Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils and Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council

- 5.7 The Conservation Area Appraisals note common detractors and forces for change in the Conservation Areas. Examples include:
- Buildings using non characteristic materials;
 - Intrusive modern features, such as uPVC windows;
 - Erosion from the sea;
 - Parking management; and
 - Clutter of street furniture which detracts from character;
- 5.8 None of the Conservation Areas in the AONB are listed on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register.



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**Figure 5.1: Designated
Heritage Assets within the
AONB**



- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
- Heritage at risk
- Scheduled monuments
- Registered parks and gardens
- Conservation area
- Listed buildings**
- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

Source: NE, HE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Analysis of indicator: Condition of archaeological features (Heritage at risk)

- 5.9 There are two Listed Buildings, one Registered Park and Garden and seven Scheduled Monuments in the AONB on the Heritage at Risk list; the full details of these sites are in **Table 5.3** below. One example is Bawdsey Manor which is a Grade II listed Registered Park and Garden. While the house is no longer at risk following works completed in 2012, the cliff garden is at high risk from coastal erosion. Arable ploughing is a reoccurring risk for many of the buried archaeological features present in the AONB, while decay and lack of maintenance threatens structures.

Table 5.3: Heritage at Risk in the AONB

| Name | Heritage classification | Description | Current condition |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Church of St Andrew, The Street | Listed Building | Place of worship | Poor |
| Bawdsey Manor | Registered Park and Garden | Park and garden | Generally satisfactory but with significant localised problems |
| Settlement site east of the Cedars | Scheduled Monument | Archaeology | Extensive significant problems |
| Enclosure east of Nether Hall | Scheduled Monument | Archaeology | Extensive significant problems |
| Settlement sites 330yds (300m) north west of Walnut Tree Farm | Scheduled Monument | Archaeology | Extensive significant problems |
| Rectilinear enclosures 1km south west of Boyton Hall Farm | Scheduled Monument | Archaeology | Extensive significant problems |
| Martello Tower "Z", south east of Buckanay Farm | Scheduled Monument | Building or structure | Poor |
| Martello tower on golf course adjoining Woodbridge Haven | Scheduled Monument | Building or structure | Poor |
| Henge and associated barrow cemetery south of Home Whin Farm | Scheduled Monument | Archaeology | Extensive significant problems |

Source: Historic England Heritage at Risk Register

Analysis of indicator: Number and location of locally important archaeological sites/features listed on the HER

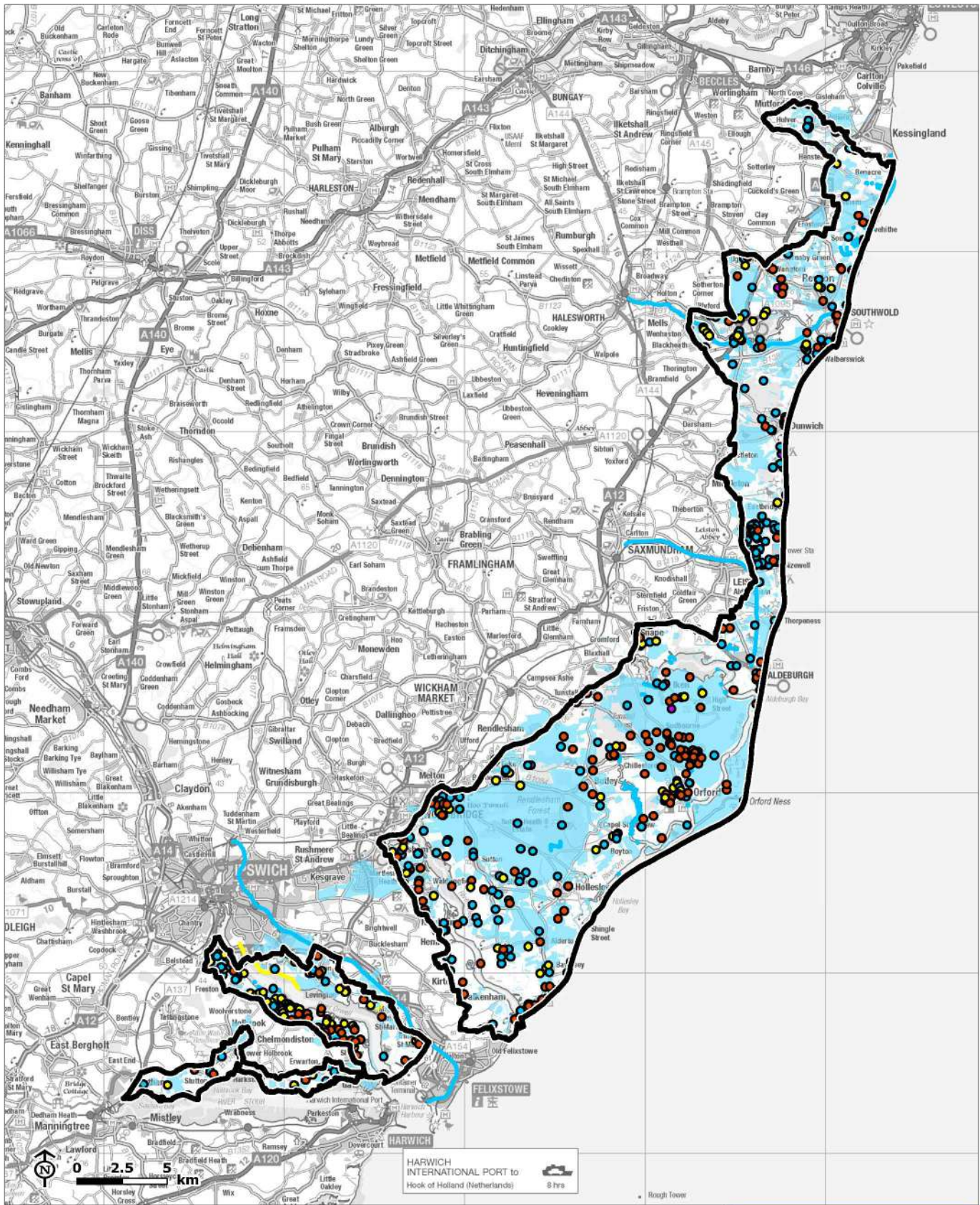
- 5.10 **Figure 5.2** displays the location of features contained within the Historic Environment Record for the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. The number of entries for each category of HER is shown below in **Table 5.4**. There are a total of 5,148 entries in the HER within the AONB²⁶. Note that in some cases, HER records overlap with other designations including Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings. HER entries corresponded to a large range of time periods ranging from prehistoric to the 20th century. It is worth noting that some record locations have not been mapped due to confidentiality.
- 5.11 Particularly high concentrations of HER records are located adjacent to the River Orwell and the area surrounding Sizewell.

Table 5.4: Historic Environment Record point type

| HER point type | Number |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Building | 56 |
| Find Spot | 228 |
| Monument | 4,465 |
| Portable Antiquities Scheme Find | 175 |
| Total | 4,924²⁶ |

Source: Suffolk County Historic Environment Record (2018)

²⁶ Please note, 224 HER records were excluded from the analysis as the records were unclassified at the time of this report.



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**Figure 5.2: Historic
Environment Record
Features**



- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
- Building
- Find spot
- Monument
- Other
- Building

Source: NE, SCC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Analysis of indicator: Management of archaeological/historic features through agri-environment schemes

- 5.12 A total 316.2 hectares (1%) of the AONB is managed for archaeological/historic features through agri-environment schemes. **Table 5.5** below shows the area coverage of each of these Environmental Stewardship options.
- 5.13 The most extensively applied Environmental Stewardship Scheme option which relates to the management of archaeological/historic features is HC12: Maintenance of wood pasture and parkland, which covers 257.7 ha.
- 5.14 Despite only covering a small proportion of the AONB, agri-environment schemes are an important source of funding for land management. Agri-environment schemes will also change following the exit of the UK from the European Union, so this indicator forms an important baseline for future monitoring.
- 5.15 It should also be noted that this indicator only considers agri-environment options which are specific to the Historic Environment (refer to paragraph **3.33** for more information on agri-environment schemes). However, other options (e.g. those conserving heath) can also act to manage the historic environment.

Table 5.5: Area of land managed for archaeological/historic features through agri-environment schemes

| Option code | Option name | Area (ha) |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| ED2 | Take archaeological features out of cultivation | 7.9 |
| HC12 | Maintenance of wood pasture and parkland | 257.7 |
| HC13 | Restoration of wood pasture and parkland | 39.0 |
| HD2 | Take archaeological features out of cultivation | 1.3 |
| HD4 | Management of scrub on archaeological features | 0.1 |
| HD5 | Management of archaeological features on grassland | 0.7 |
| HD7 | Arable reversion by natural regeneration | 9.5 |
| Total | | 316.2 |

Source: Natural England, Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL) (2017 and 2018).

Data sources

- Historic England GIS data (downloaded 2018):
 - Scheduled Monuments
 - Registered Parks and Gardens
 - Listed Buildings
 - Heritage at Risk
- Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils and Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council Conservation Area data
- Suffolk County Historic Environment Record

Recommendations

- The national and local data should be collected every five years, with trends over time monitored and analysed from the baseline set in this State of the AONB Report.
- The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB should continue to monitor the Heritage at Risk register for the addition of features within the AONB. Features that are currently on the Heritage at Risk Register should be appropriately managed and protected to restore/prevent further decline to the feature. Some archaeological features, particularly close to the coast, will be hard to manage and are likely to be lost to erosion. Surveying activity at these sites should be prioritised to record as much information as possible before they are lost.
- The coverage of agri-environment schemes is likely to change significantly over the next five years, following the conclusion of existing agri-environment schemes and the development of a new set of agri-environment payments following the exit of the UK from the EU.
- The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB should work to preserve the positive characteristics of these areas through the planning system to reverse negative trends which have already impacted on Conservation Areas and prevent further negative impacts.

6 Socio-economic profile



6 Socio-economic profile

Indicators selected for this theme

- Population trends
 - Total population
 - Population density
 - Age profile
- Levels of deprivation
- Barriers to housing and services
- Average property values and second home ownership
- Patterns in employment and types of businesses

Summary headlines

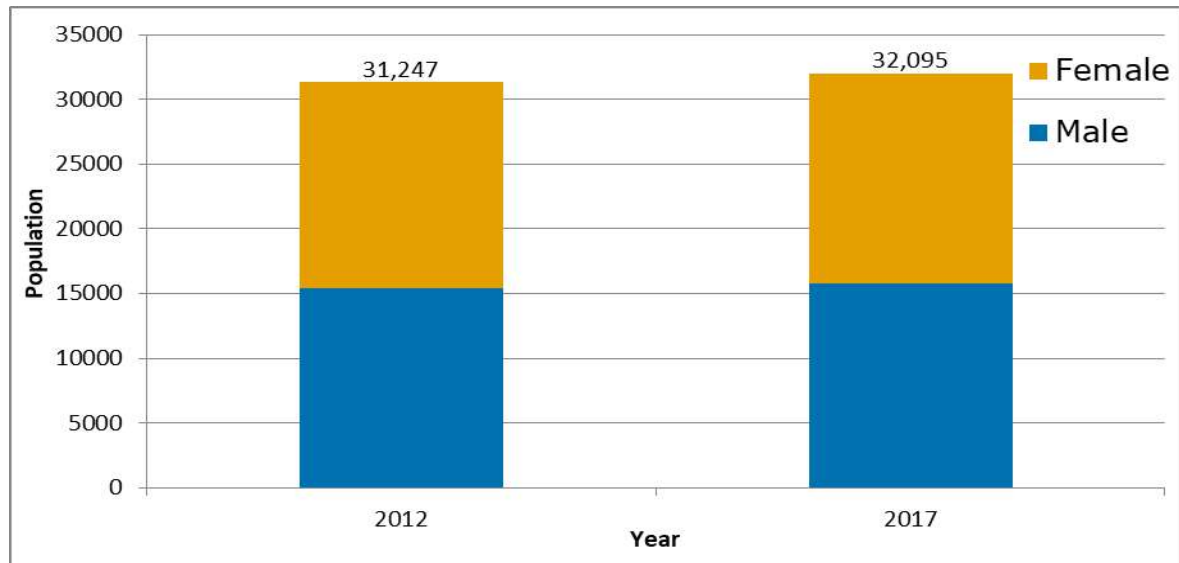
- The estimated population within the AONB in 2017 is 32,095; a 2.7% increase in the five years since 2012.
- The gender split of the population is relatively equal, with males comprising 49.5% of the population and females comprising 50.5%.
- The population of the AONB is ageing, with people aged 60-69 forming the largest age group.
- Population density is low, particularly in the wider context of south east England. The majority of the AONB contains less than ten people per hectare.
- Levels of deprivation in the AONB tend to be moderate on a national level.

Analysis of indicator: Population trends

Total population size

- 6.1 According to ONS Population Estimates from mid-2017, the current population of the AONB is 32,095. The split by gender is relatively equal; 49.5% are male and 50.5% female. The population within the AONB has increased by 2.7% from the total population of 31,247 in the mid-2012 ONS Population Estimates. Population data for 2012 and 2017 is shown in **Figure 6.1**.

Figure 6.1: AONB population split by gender (2012-2017)



Source: Office of National Statistics Population Estimates (2012 and 2017)

Population density

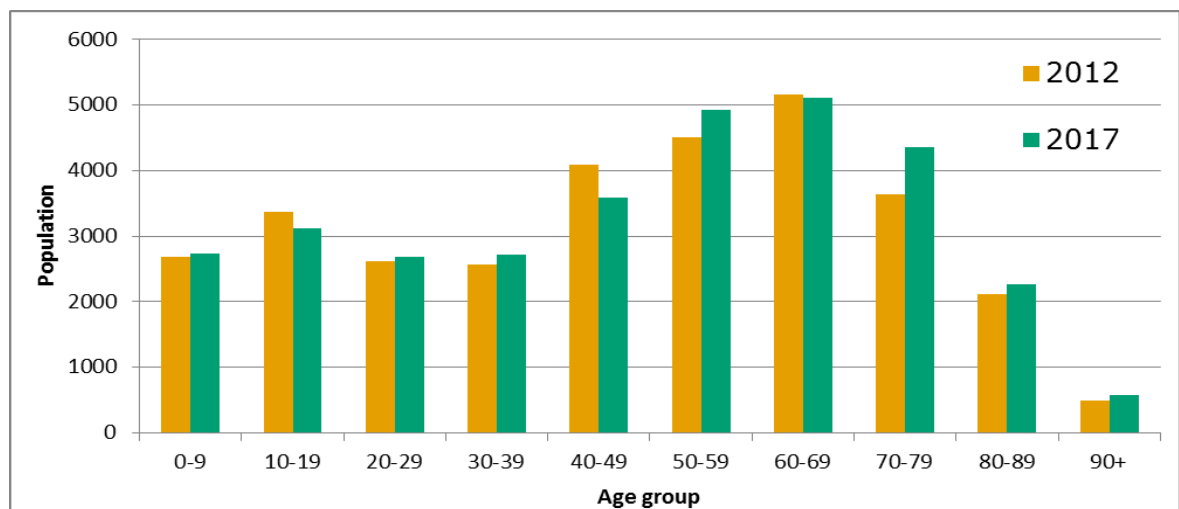
6.2 Population density within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is generally low in the context of east England. The majority of the AONB contains less than ten people per hectare as shown in **Figure 6.3**. The only area in the AONB that exceeds this is the village of Reydon, which has 10-20 people per hectare. There are some more densely settled areas close to the AONB, including Leiston, Woodbridge, Kesgrave, Felixtowe, Harwich and Mistley. Ipswich is the closest area at where population density reaches 90-100 people per hectare. The centre of the town is located less than three kilometres from the AONB boundary.

Age profile

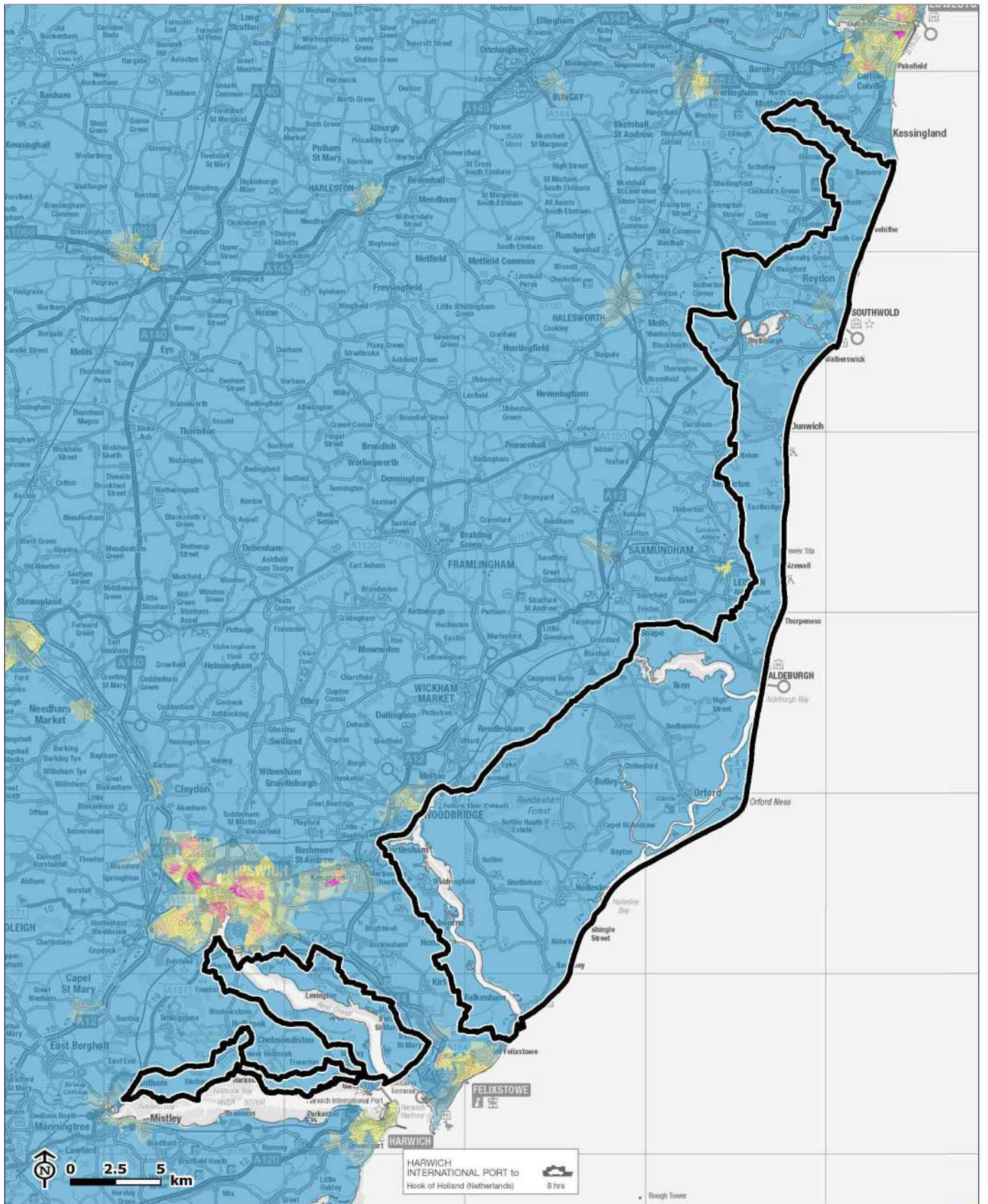
6.3 The chart at

6.4 **Figure 6.2** shows the number of people with each age bracket residing in the AONB for both 2012 and 2017. The age bracket of 60-69 has the highest number of people, with 5,114 people fitting into this age group. This is closely followed by the 50-59 (4,934) and 70-79 (4,359) age brackets, illustrating that a higher proportion of residents in the AONB are older adults. Between the 2012 and 2017 mid-year estimates, numbers of people in all age brackets have increased except for those in the age brackets of 10-19 and 40-49.

6.5 **Figure 6.2: Age of AONB Residents (2012- 2017)**



Source: Office for National Statistics (2012 and 2017)



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Figure 6.3: Population density

- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
- Population density (people per hectare)***
- 0 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 70
- 70 - 80
- 80 - 90
- 90 - 100

*Calculated from Office for National Statistics Lower Super Output Area Mid-Year Population Estimates 2017

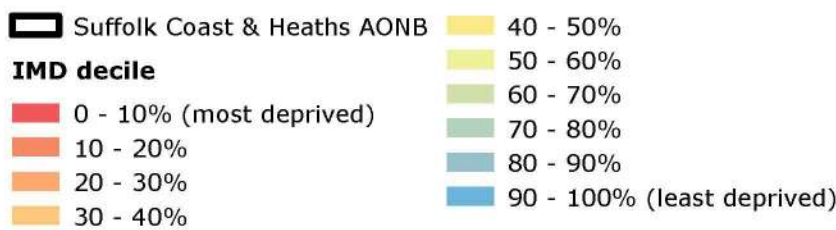
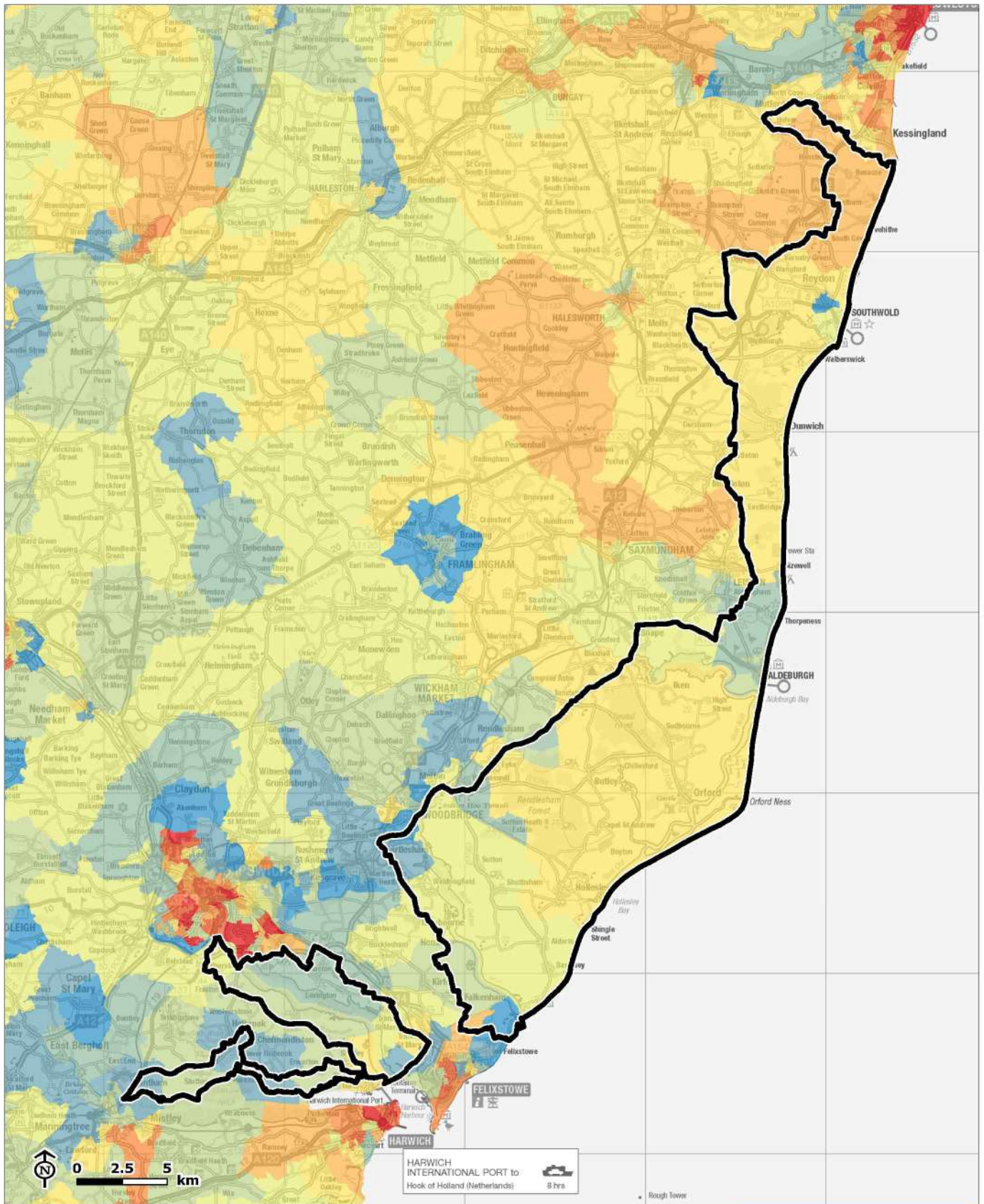
Source: NE, ONS

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000



Analysis of indicator: Levels of deprivation

- 6.6 **Figure 6.4** shows the overall levels of deprivation within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, as recorded in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The rural areas between settlements in the AONB tend to be more deprived than the areas near towns. The least deprived areas in the AONB include parts of Felixstowe and Southwold.
- 6.7 **Figure 6.5** shows the IMD for barriers to housing and services within the AONB. Compared to the overall IMD, this shows relatively high levels of deprivation in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. A significant proportion of the AONB falls within the 'most deprived' category. This reflects the high houses prices in rural areas and the limited provision of services. Areas surrounding the larger settlements (including Felixstowe, Leiston and Southwold) tend to be less deprived.



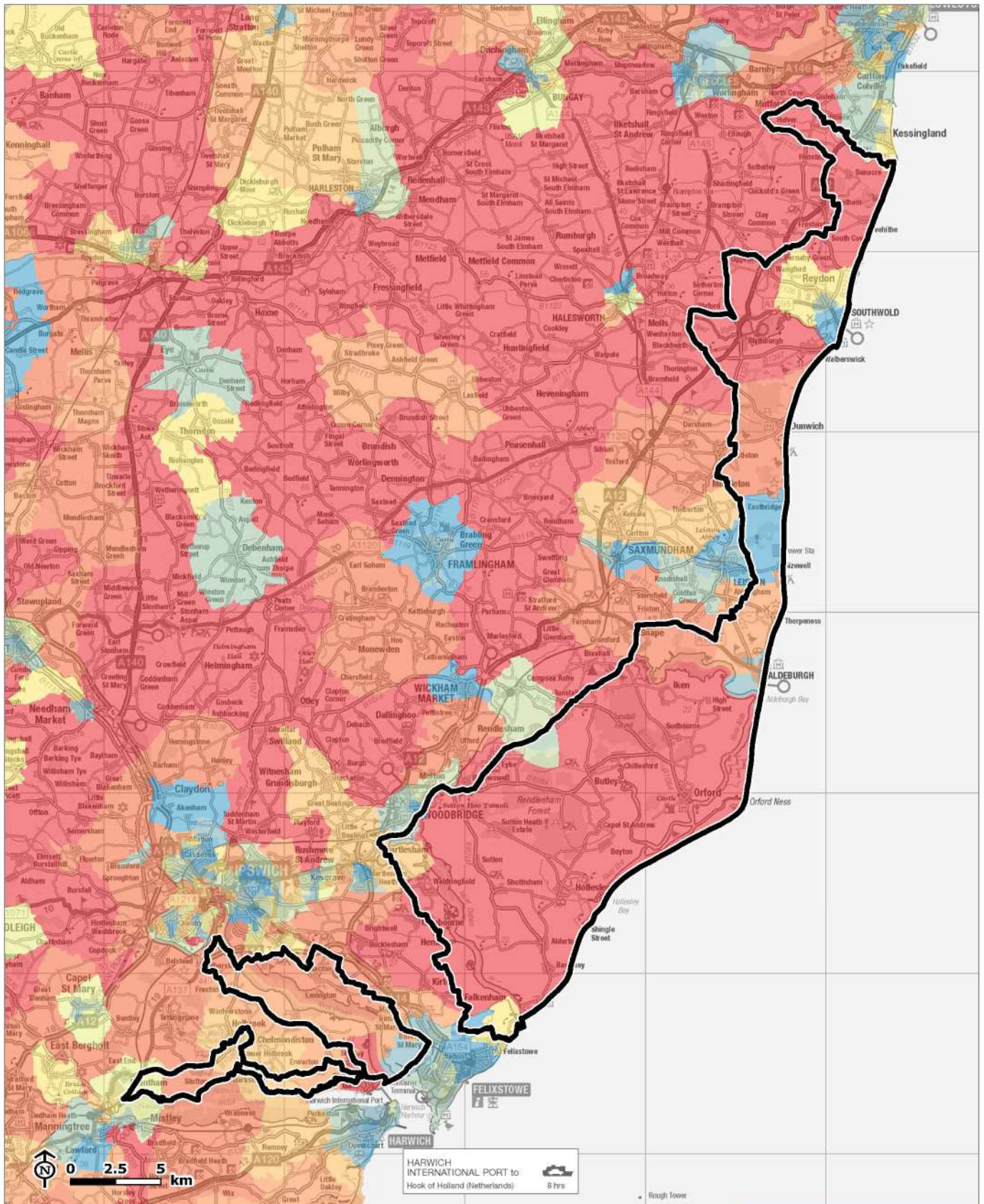
Source: NE, DCLG

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

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Figure 6.4: Suffolk Coast & Heaths Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)





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Figure 6.5: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Barriers to Housing and Services Deprivation Indicator



Source: NE, DCLG

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000



Analysis of indicator: Average property values and second home ownership

Average property price

- 6.9 As can be seen in **Figure 6.6**, average property prices (for the year 2018) vary significantly throughout the AONB. The highest average property prices are found in the towns of Aldeburgh and Southwold with mean house prices of £534,655 and £484,432 respectively. Lower average house prices for the AONB are found on the outskirts of Ipswich, Kessingland and Leiston.
- 6.10 It should be noted that most of the postcode regions extend outside of the AONB, so the average may be skewed by higher or lower house prices outside of the AONB area and may not be a true representation of house prices within the AONB.

Second home ownership

- 6.11 2011 Census data on second addresses indicates that there are a total of 6,391 people in the Waveney and Suffolk Coast districts with second addresses. While this figure is not specific to the AONB, it indicates that there are potentially high levels of second home ownership in the AONB.
- 6.12 High levels of second home ownership are frequently an issue in coastal areas and protected landscapes, given the subsequent impact on house prices, services and employment.

Analysis of indicator: Patterns in employment and types of businesses

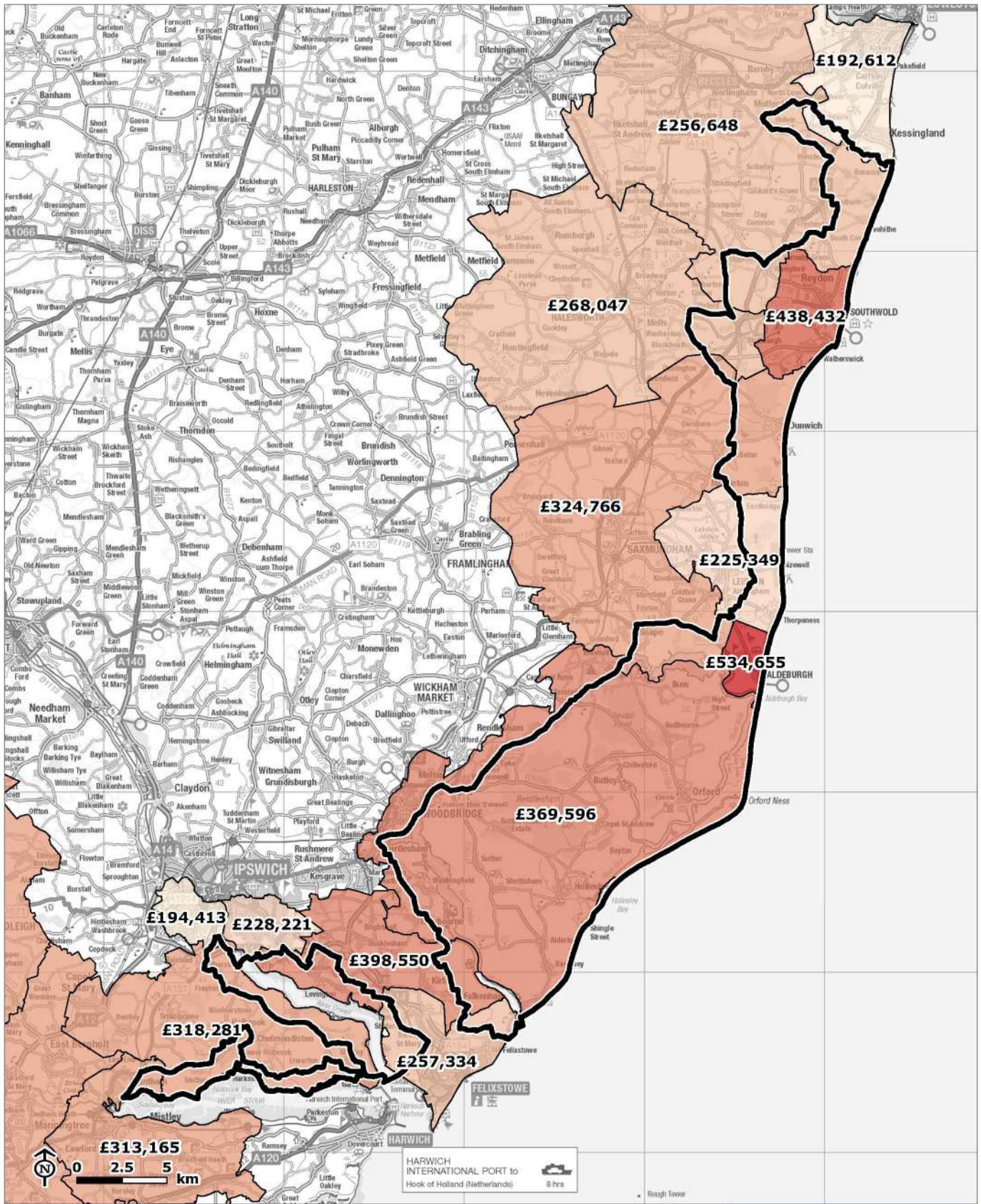
- 6.13 There is limited available data on employment and types of businesses within the AONB. However, the tourism sector is an important source of employment. The 2017 Economic Impact of Tourism Report states that there are 3,401 full time equivalent jobs linked to tourism. Total actual tourism related employment is estimated to be 4,655.
- 6.14 The Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation (DMO) currently has 211 registered members. The majority of these businesses are accommodation providers, attractions, food/drink providers or tourism establishments. While the membership is not restricted to businesses within the AONB, the membership of the DMO demonstrates the importance of tourism to the local economy.

Data sources

- Land Registry Data (2018)
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015
- Office of National Statistics mid-year Population Estimates (2012 and 2017)
- Office of National Statistics Census 2011
- The Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation membership (2018)
- Department for Communities and Local Government

Recommendations

- The AONB should work with partners to accurately identify levels of second home ownership to accurately monitor this indicator.
- Data sources for levels of employment and types of businesses within the AONB were not readily available at the time of writing the State of the AONB Report. The AONB should endeavour to work with partners to obtain employment and business data over the course of the next Management Plan to allow for monitoring of change in this sector.
- New census data should be available for the next iteration of the State of the AONB report, enabling indicators derived from census data to be updated.



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Figure 6.6: Average House Prices

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB | £250,000 - 300,000 |
| Postcode district | £300,000 - 350,000 |
| Average house price | £350,000 - 400,000 |
| £190,000 - 200,000 | £400,000 - 450,000 |
| £200,000 - 250,000 | £450,000 - 500,000 |
| | £500,000 - 550,000 |

Source: ESRI, Land Registry, NE

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000



7 Tourism and the visitor economy



7 Tourism and the visitor economy

Indicators selected for this theme

- Location and total length of Public Rights of Way
- Extent of Open Access Land
- Visitors to the AONB
- Visitor perception of AONB and valued features
- Annual economic impact of tourism

Summary headlines

- Annually, tourism in the AONB is estimated to be worth £210,068,409, a 6.4% increase since 2015.
- There are a total of 660 kilometres of public rights of way and 4,168 hectares of open access land within the AONB.
- The majority of visitors surveyed stated that the natural environment of the AONB was their most valued feature of the landscape.
- In 2018, there were a total of 174 people regularly volunteering. Collectively, these volunteers committed 143.5 days' worth of time to the AONB (excluding BeachWatch volunteers).

Analysis of indicator: Location and total length of Public rights of way

- 7.1 The distribution of public rights of way (PRoW) is shown in **Figure 7.1**. The total length of PRoW in the AONB is approximately 660.4 kilometres. These are shown by category in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Public Rights of Way in the AONB

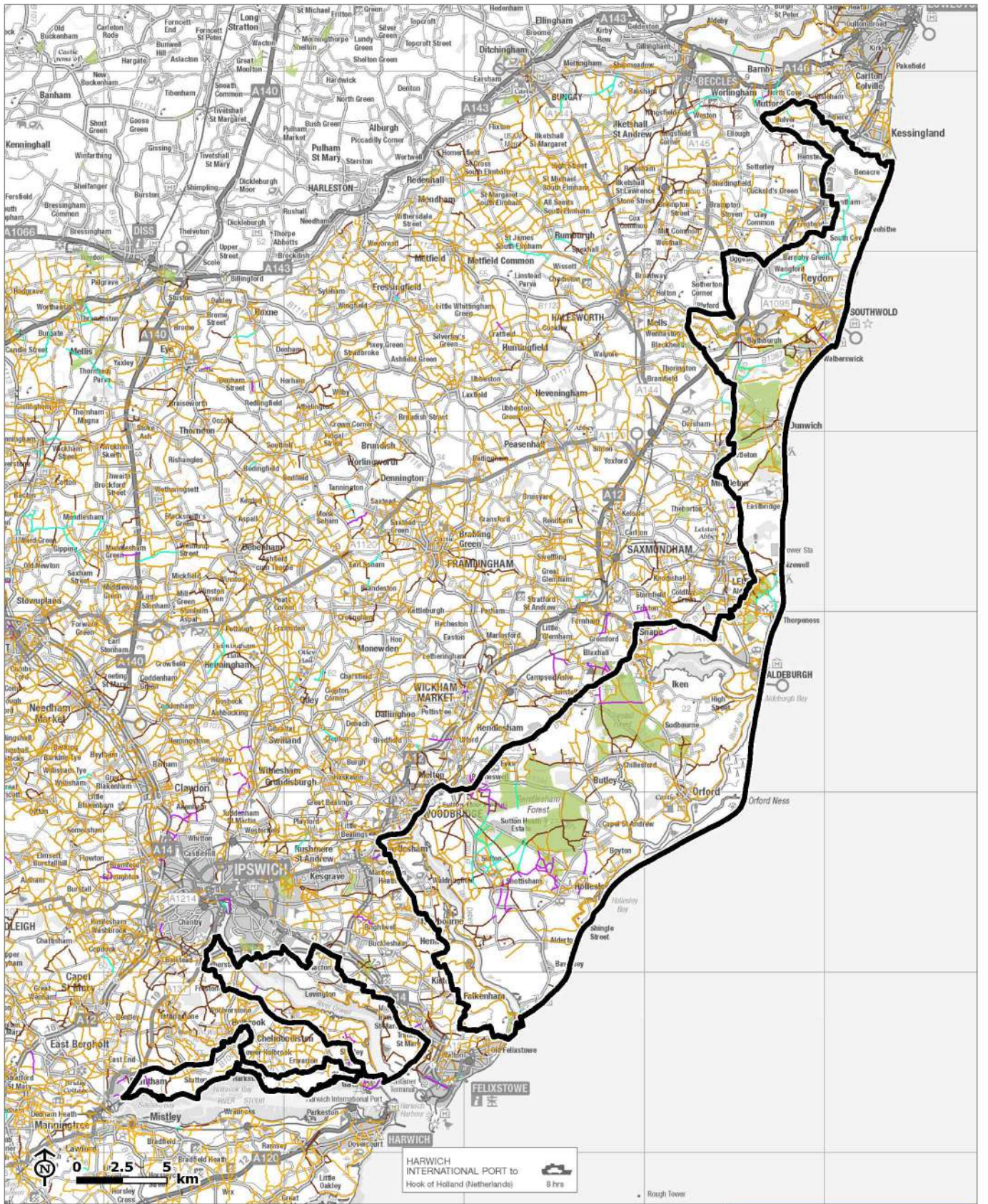
| Type of PROW | Total Length (Km) |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Footpath | 491.6 |
| Bridleway | 103.6 |
| Byway | 32.4 |
| Restricted Byway | 32.8 |
| Total | 660.4 |

Source: Suffolk County Council GIS data (2018)

- 7.2 While there are PRoW throughout the AONB, there are certain parts that remain disconnected or gappy. Areas surrounding settlements tend to be better provisioned with PRoW including the areas near to Southwold, Thorpeness and Aldeburgh. Bridleways are concentrated in areas surrounding Woodbridge, Butley and Walberswick.

Long distance footpaths

- 7.3 There are three long-distance paths including the Suffolk Coast Path (80.5 km), Stour and Orwell Walk (67.6 km) and the Sandlings Walk (96.6 km), which collectively cover a significant area of the AONB (see **Figure 7.2**).



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Figure 7.1: Public Rights of Way

- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
- Bridleway
- Byway
- Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- Open access land

Source: NE, ECC, SCC

Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000



Figure 7.2: Long distance footpaths

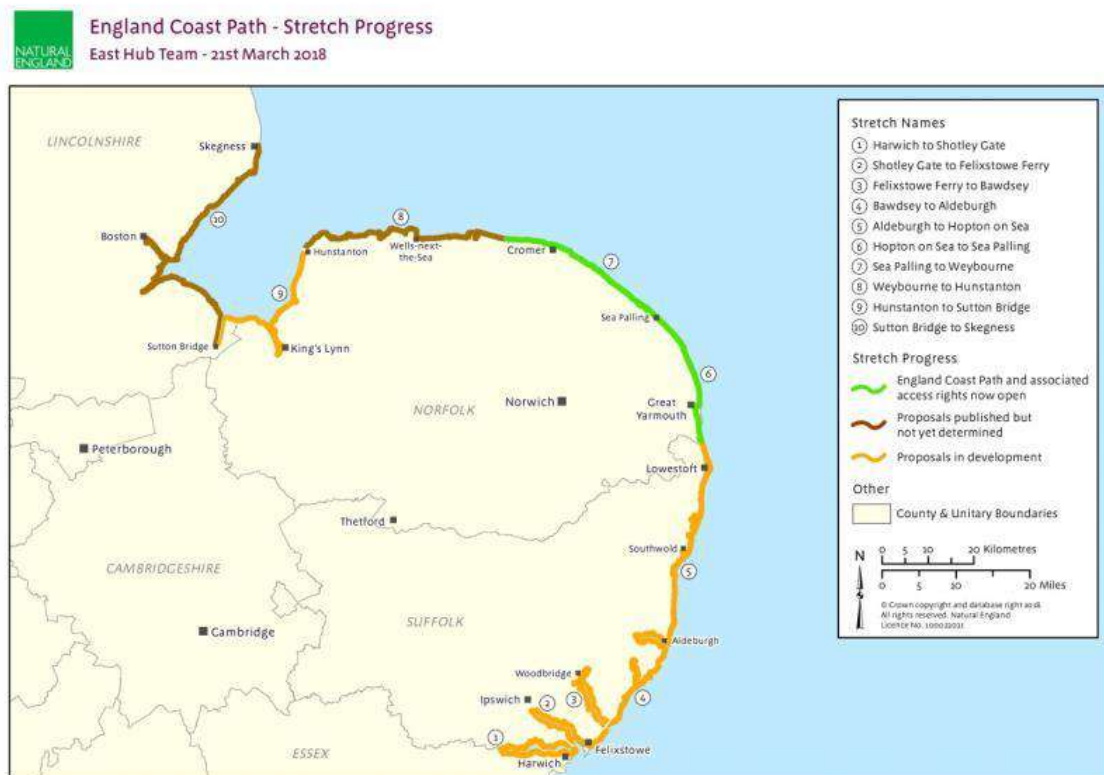


Source: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB long distance footpaths

Proposed footpaths and extension of the Coast Path

7.4 In 2014 Natural England proposed an extension to the existing coast path within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB (as part of the England Coast Path). The area where the proposed coast path is in development can be seen in **Figure 7.3**. There are mixed opinions to the creation of this new public right of way. The results of the AONB visitor survey identified that almost three quarters (73.6%) of respondents were supportive of the concept of extending the coast path, but an additional 20.8% expressed they had some concerns. There were no respondents in the online survey completely adverse to the concept of extending the coast path, as can be seen in **Figure 7.4, A**. In December 2018, the AONB released a position statement on the England Coast Path²⁷. The AONB is supportive of the improvement and creation of access to the protected landscape where 'the development of the England Coast Path is aligned to the purposes of the AONB and does not detract from its natural beauty or special qualities'.

Figure 7.3: Progress of proposed coast path stretches in the east of England



Source: Natural England (2018) England Coast Path – Stretch Progress

7.5 More concerns were voiced when respondents were asked their opinion on the proposed route of the new coast path. Almost a third of all respondents (31.3%, 99 respondents) stating they were 'supportive with some concerns'. As can be seen in **Figure 7.4, B**, a further 11.1% of respondents stated they were 'fully supportive' of the proposed route and 2.0% stated that they were 'not supportive at all'. Respondents were prompted to provide further information on their thoughts and concerns regarding the proposed coast path route. Key themes from these responses included;

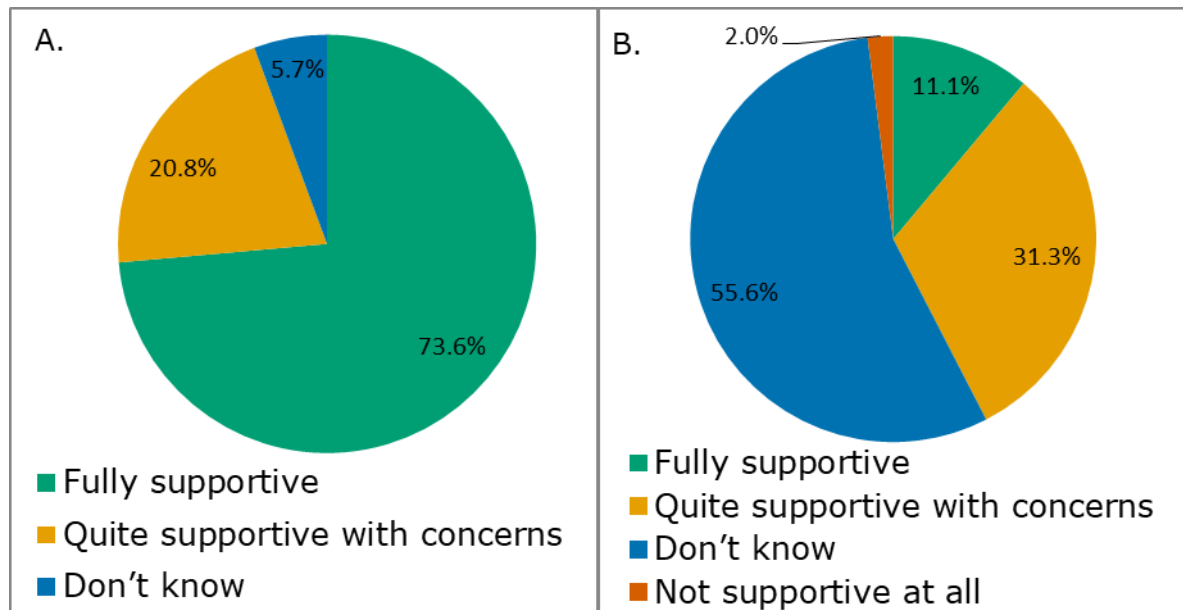
- Many respondents stated they were unaware of the footpath or the proposed route it will take;
- General support for improved access;
- Concern for not leaving any areas to remain 'rugged' or 'wild' and the disruption it may cause to tranquillity;

²⁷ <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/assets/Publications/Position-Statements/SCH-AONB-Position-Statement-England-Coast-Path-Dec-2018.pdf>

- Concern for sensitive wildlife such as birds and the impact of increased access and visitors; and
- Concerns for financing coast path creation and maintenance.

7.6 More than half of respondents stated they 'don't know' when asked their opinion on the proposed route for the coast path. This suggests there is a lack of awareness of the route of the new coast path. Far fewer stated they 'don't know' when asked their opinion on the concept of the coast path (5.7%). This suggests that there is a gap in knowledge with limited information being provided on the proposed route.

Figure 7.4A: Opinions on the concept of the coast path extension. 7.4B: Opinions on the proposed route.




Source: Suffolk coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19)

Use of Public Rights of Way


7.7 **Figure 7.5** shows a heat map produced using data from the Strava app (2018). The data shows that Rendlesham and Turnstall Forests are popular destinations which are used extensively for running and cycling. Routes following the coast between Southwold and Aldeburgh are particularly well-used by walkers, although this appears to be following the beaches rather than PRow or the long distance coast paths mentioned in paragraph 7.3. Water-based recreational activities are concentrated in several areas including the length of the River Orwell, the River Deben, (especially further inland by Waldringfield) near Shingle Street, on the river Alde near Slaghden (where there is a sailing school) and near Warberswick and Southwold.


7.8 Strava heat mapping only records the movements of users of the app, so it is important to note this will not include all recreational activity within the AONB.



 Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Recreation activity

 High activity

 Low activity

Source: NE, Strava

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**Figure 7.5: Strava heat
map showing levels of
activity within the AONB**

LUC



Map Scale @ A4: 1:300,000

Analysis of indicator: Extent of Open Access Land

- 7.9 4,168 hectares of the AONB is Open Access Land; 10% of the AONB. The extent of this land is mapped in **Figure 7.1**.

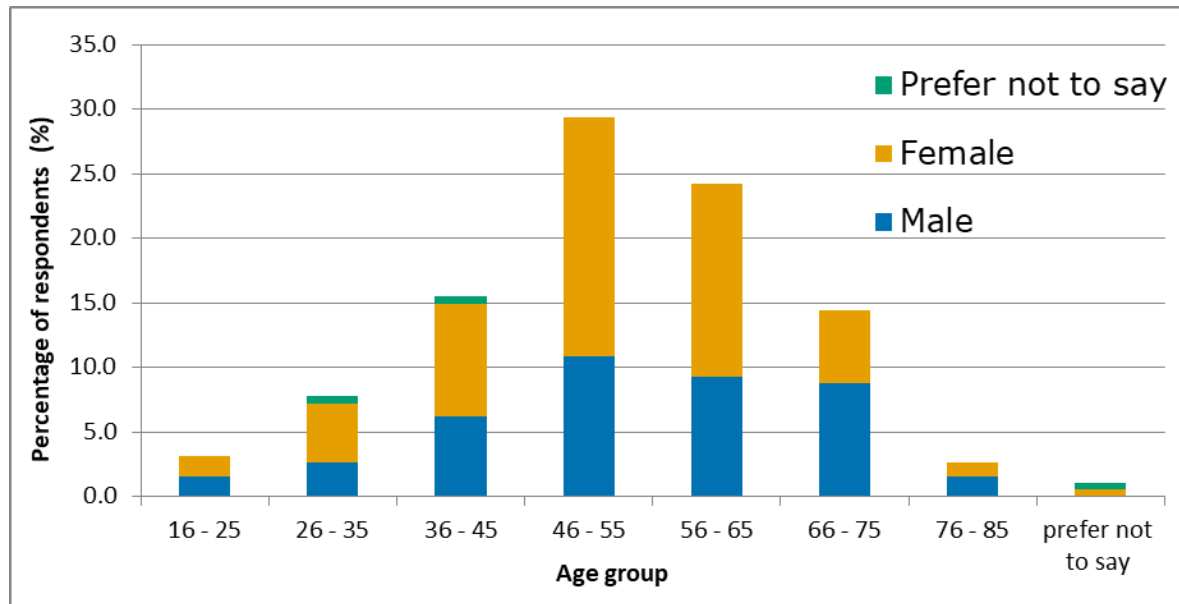
Analysis of indicator: Profile of visitors to Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

- 7.10 The following data is derived from the results of the 2018-2019 Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONBs online visitor survey which was conducted in conjunction with the production of this report. A summary explaining how the survey was undertaken is set out in paragraph 2.7. The survey received a total of 196 respondents for questions relating to Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. It should be noted that some questions could be skipped; therefore there were differing numbers of respondents for each question.

Age and gender of visitors

- 7.11 **Figure 7.6** shows the age profile and gender of survey respondents. More females answered the survey than males, totalling 57% of responses, with the largest demographic group being 46-55 year old women. This age bracket was the largest respondent group for both genders totalling 29.9% of respondents. 56-65 year olds were the next most common response group (24.7% of responses) followed by 36-45 year olds (15.5% of responses). Only six individuals (3.1% of respondents) from the 16-25 and 76-85 age bracket took part in the survey.

Figure 7.6: Age and gender of 2018-2019 Visitor Survey respondents



Source: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19)

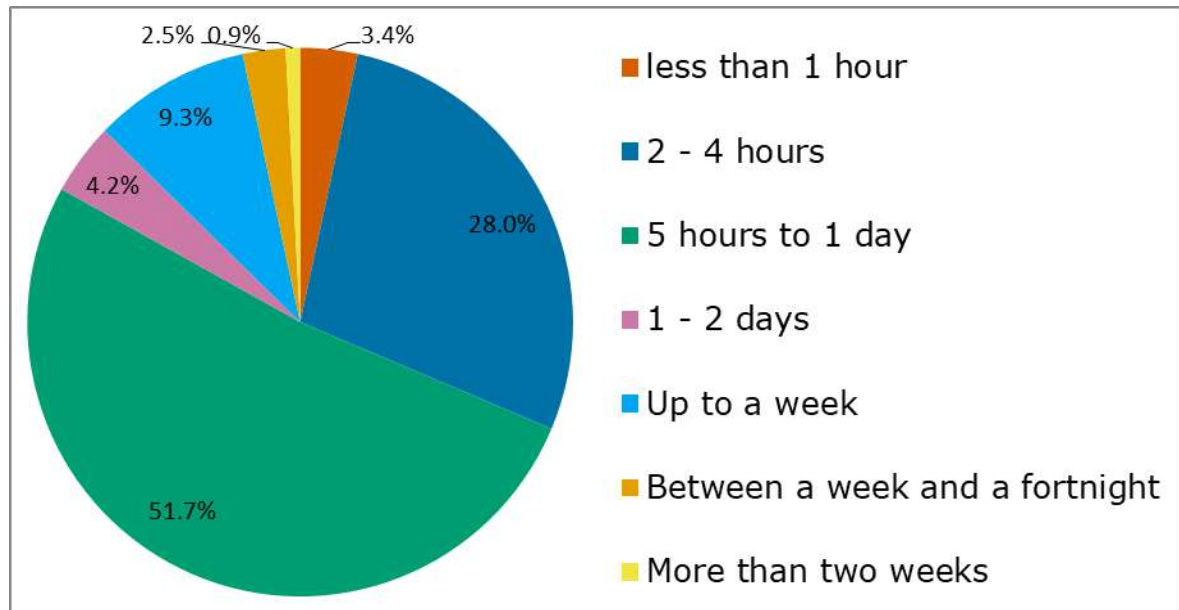
Method of transport

- 7.12 The large majority of survey respondents who travelled to the AONB by private motor vehicle (85.4%). Small proportions used other transport types including 6.1% by foot and 2.4% by both bike and public transport.

Duration of stay

- 7.13 The majority of respondents to the visitor survey stay in the AONB for a day or less. Collectively these equate to 83.1% of survey respondents. Nearly half of visitors to the AONB stay for a duration between five hours and a day. A comparatively small proportion of visitors stay longer than a week (3.4%). Duration of stay is illustrated in **Figure 7.7**.

Figure 7.7: Duration of stay of 2018-2019 Visitor Survey respondents

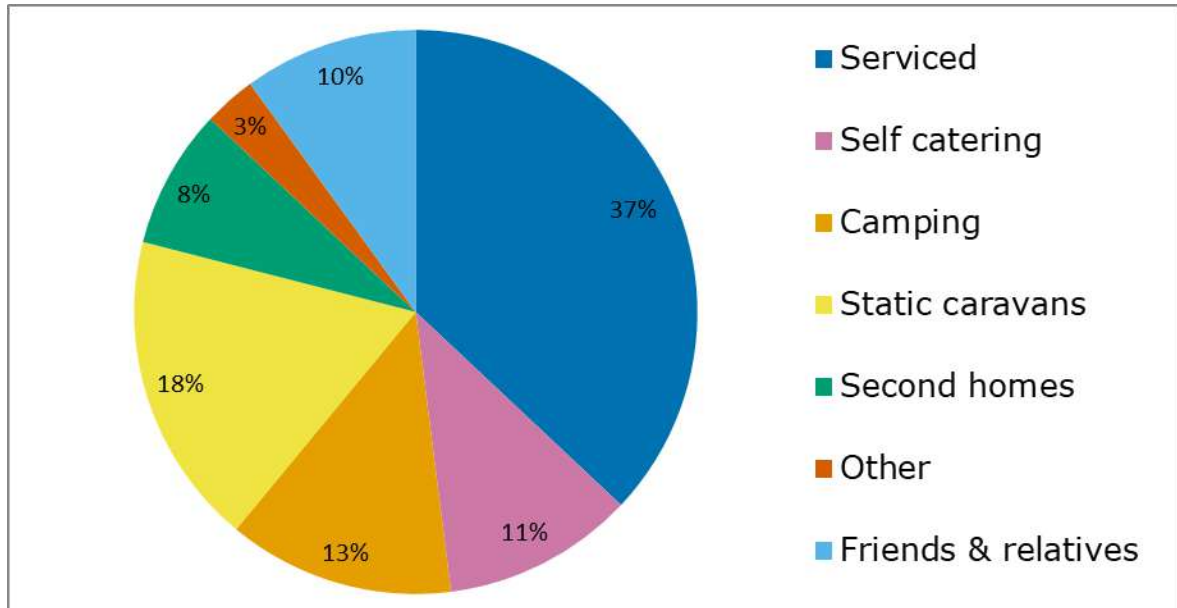


Source: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19)

Accommodation type

- 7.14 The Economic Impact of Tourism Report (2017) identified there was a total of 306,600 staying visitors in 2017, a 1% increase since 2015. The largest proportion were staying in serviced accommodation (37%). Static caravans (18%) camping (13%), self-catering (11%), friends and relatives (10%) and second homes (8%) were the other main accommodation types used as shown in **Figure 7.8**.
- 7.15 Similar results were obtained in the 2018-19 Visitor Survey which identified that the largest proportion of respondents (47.1%) stayed in self-catering accommodation. Other accommodation types such as hotels were used infrequently (5%). However, it is important to note that there was a low number of overnight visitors to the AONB (17 respondents), this could be because the majority of respondents are likely to have been residents or nearby visitors due to the season.
- 7.16 In the Economic Impact of Tourism Report it was identified that day visitors favoured coastal visits over urban or countryside visits, with 52.2% of visits being to the coast. 39.4% of visits were to the countryside with only 8.5% of the 3,860,768 estimated 2017 visits being to urban areas.
- 7.17 The majority of respondents to the 2018-19 Visitor Survey were day visitors from home (70.7%). Few respondents were visiting friends of family (8.5%), or on holiday (3.7%).

Figure 7.8: Accommodation types



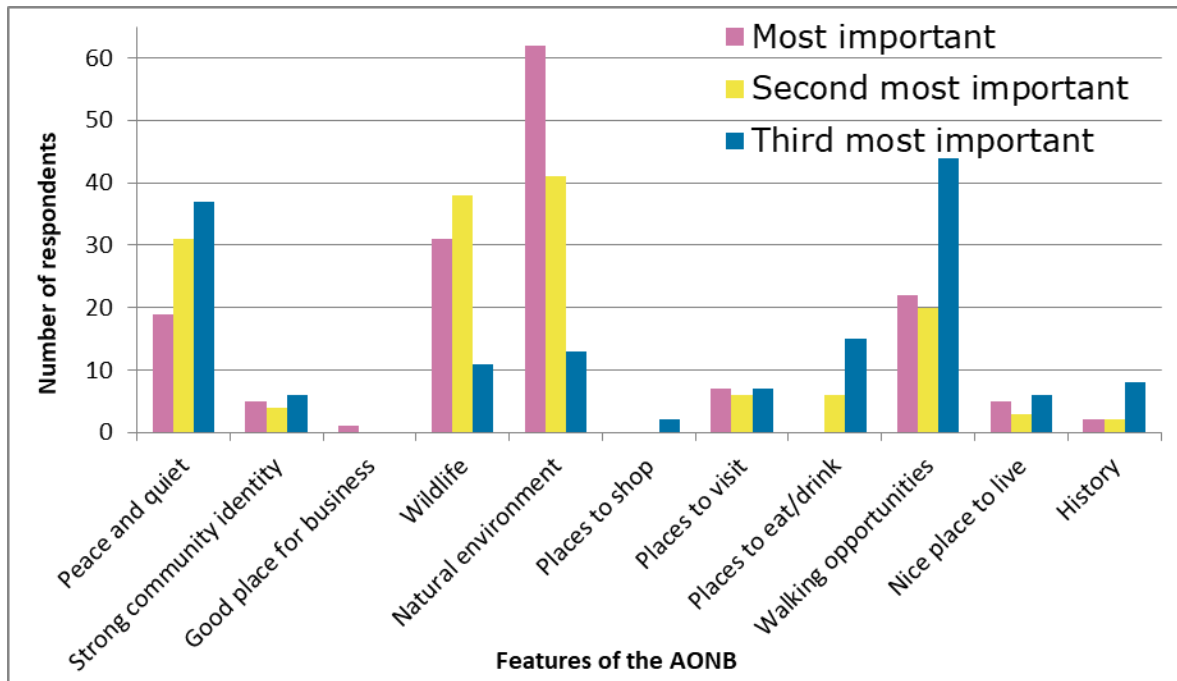
Source: Economic Impact of Tourism in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Report (2017)

Analysis of indicator: Visitor perception of AONB and valued features

Valued features

7.18 The 2018-19 Visitor Survey asked respondents what were their three most valued features of the AONB. The natural environment was most frequently identified as the most important feature, with over 60 people choosing this as their most important feature. Also ranked as valued features were wildlife, walking opportunities and peace and quiet. Very few people regarded places to shop or being good for business as one of their top three valued features of the AONB. The results of this question are shown in **Figure 7.9**.

Figure 7.9: 2018-2019 Visitor Survey respondents most valued features of the AONB

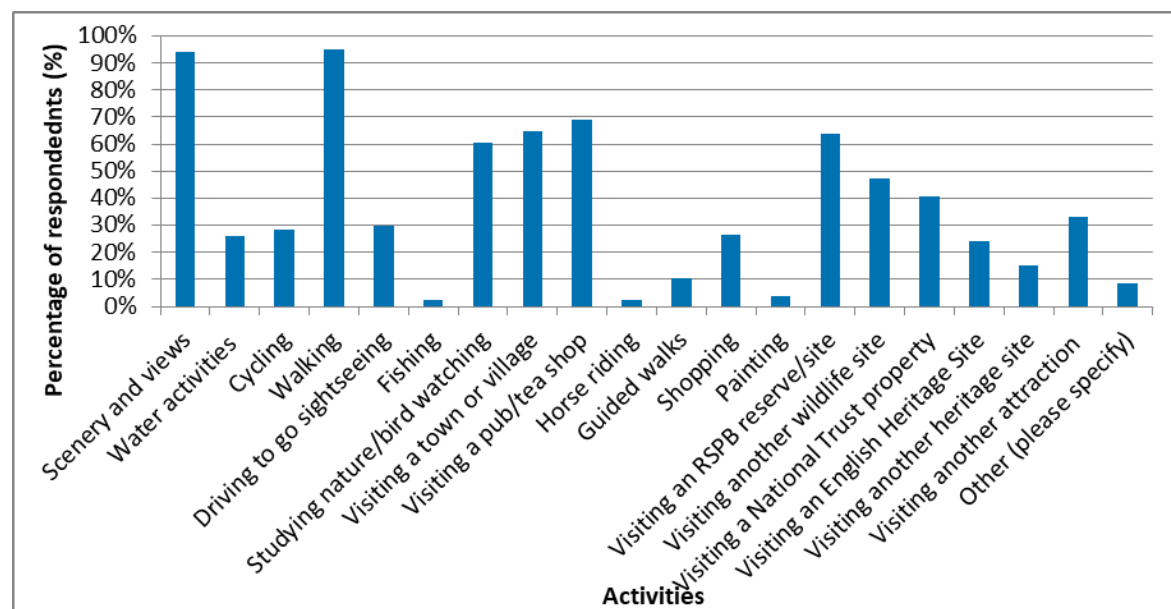


Source: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19)

Activities participated in

7.19 The chart at **Figure 7.10** shows the Visitor Survey respondents answers to the question 'What activities do you enjoy doing in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB?'. The most popular activity was 'walking', which was selected by 94.8% of respondents and 'appreciating the scenery and views' (selected by 94.2% of respondents). Other common activities included 'studying nature', 'visiting a town or village', 'visiting a pub or tea shop' and 'visiting an RSPB reserve', all of which were selected by over 50% of respondents. Some of the less popular activities included horse riding, fishing and painting.

Figure 7.10: Activities 2018-2019 Visitor Survey respondents participated in the AONB



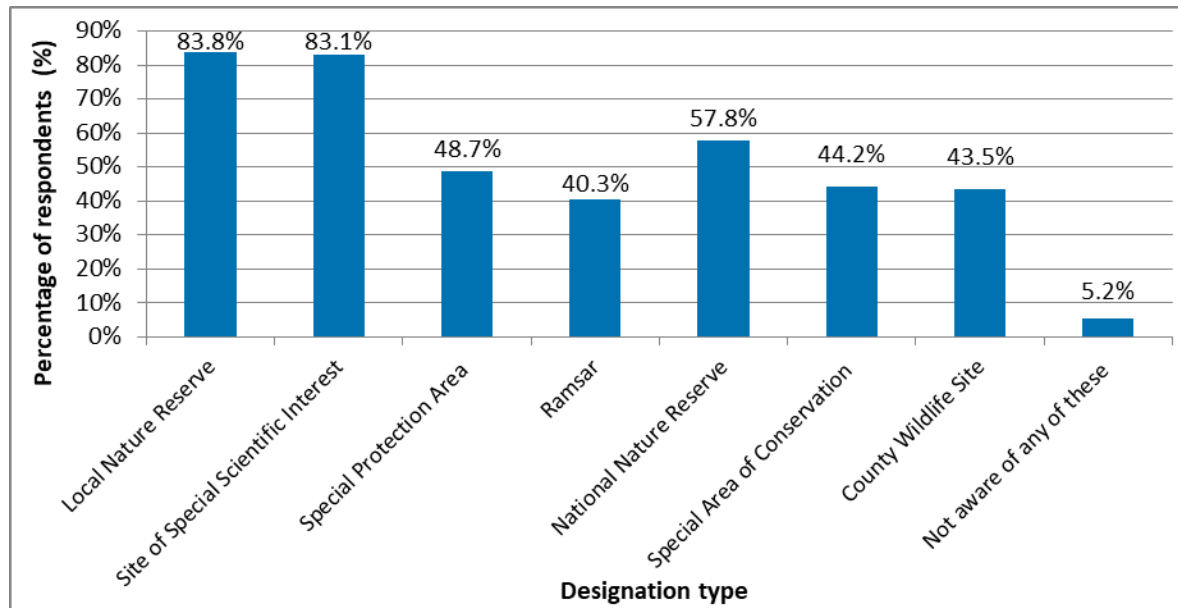
Source: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19)

Awareness of designations

7.20 Of those who answered the question on awareness of designations, 5.2% stated they were unaware of any of the designations shown in **Figure 7.11** for conserving landscapes, wildlife habitats and species. One of the most commonly recognised designations were SSSIs, with 83.1% stating they were aware of SSSIs within the AONB. Also commonly identified was the presence of Local Nature Reserves (83.8%), despite being the designation covering the lowest percentage of the AONB area (when compared to the other designations).

7.21 Less than half of respondents were aware of the presence of Special Protection Areas (identified by 48.7%), Special Areas of Conservation (identified by 44.2%), Ramsar sites (identified by 40.3%) and County Wildlife Sites (identified by 43.5%). This is despite many of these designations covering large proportions of the AONB area (e.g. SPAs cover more than a quarter of the AONB area (25.7%)). The extent of nature conservation designations in the AONB are discussed in paragraph 4.4.

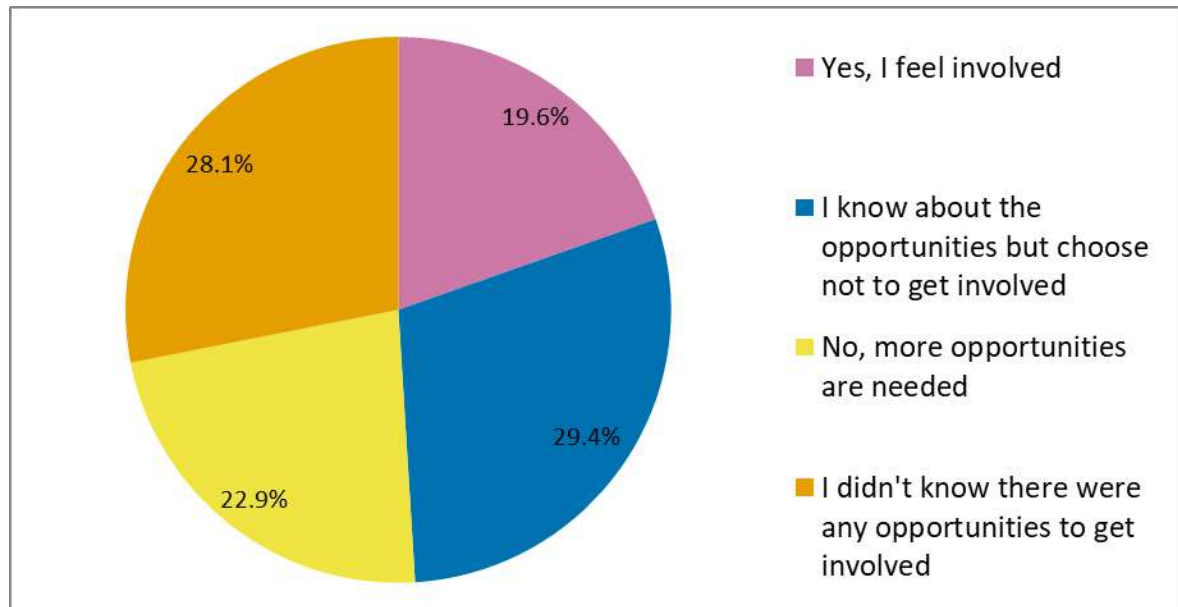
Figure 7.11: Awareness of designations within the AONB for protecting landscape, wildlife habitats and species



Source Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19) – LUC
Involvement and sense of obligation for caring for the AONB

- 7.22 Wildlife is generally regarded to be important to conserve with 94.1% of respondents (154 respondents) agreeing it is 'very important' to conserve wildlife and 5.2% stating it is 'somewhat important'.
- 7.23 99.4% of respondents agreed it was the responsibility of the people who live, work and visit the AONB to care for the area.
- 7.24 Almost all respondents agreed that local businesses should be involved with looking after the AONB, with 72.7% stating this was 'very important' and 25.3% stating this was 'important, but not essential'.
- 7.25 Despite most respondents expressing that it is the responsibility of users of the AONB to care for the area, only 20.6% say that they feel involved with opportunities to care for the AONB. 30.1% of respondents are aware of opportunities, but choose not to get involved. Almost half of the respondents were either unaware there were any opportunities to help care for the area or do not think there are enough opportunities, as shown in **Figure 7.12**.

Figure 7.12: Opportunities to be involved in caring for the AONB

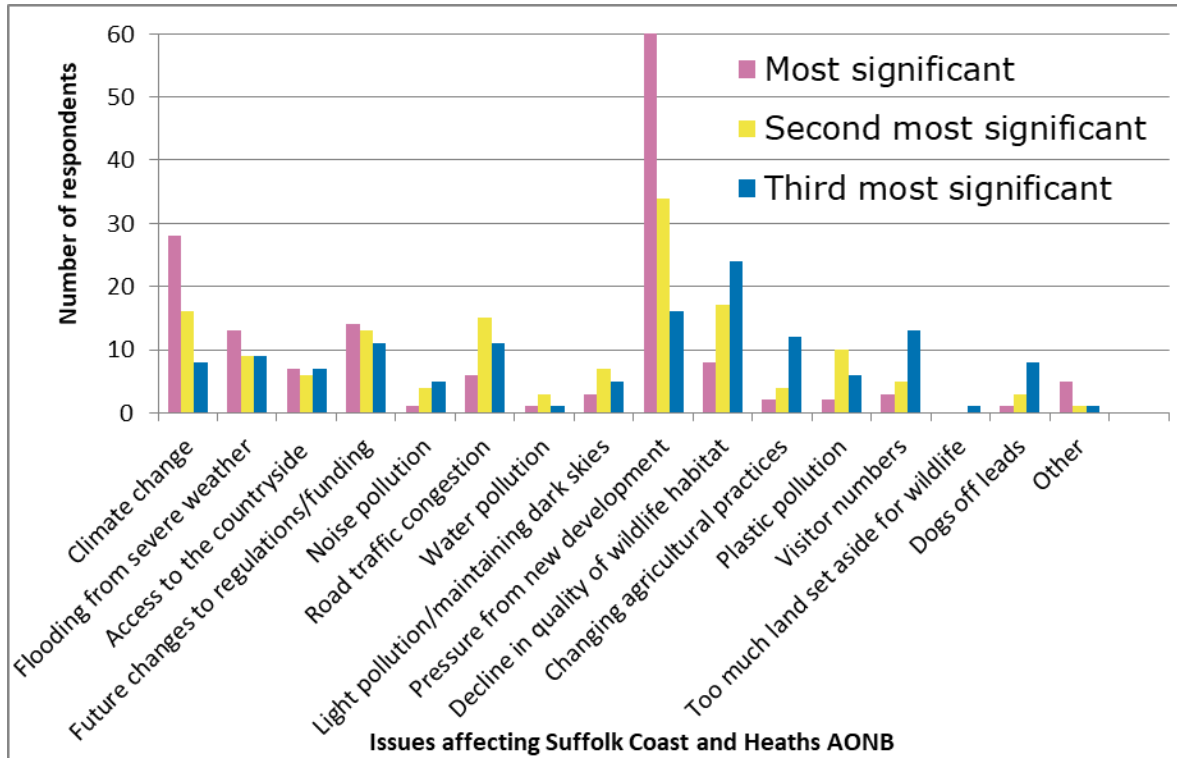


Source: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19)

Concerns for the AONB and thoughts on its management

- 7.26 The chart at **Figure 7.13** shows the top three concerns of respondents to the 2018-19 Visitor Survey. By far the most frequently selected concern was the pressures of new development. This was selected as the highest concern by 39.0% of respondents, the second most important by 22.1% of respondents, and third most significant by 10.4% of respondents. Climate change was the next most commonly selected 'most important' issue selected by 18.2% of respondents. Risks of severe flooding and future changes in funding were both also commonly selected as 'most important' issues, selected by 8.4% and 9.1% of respondents respectively.
- 7.27 Issues commonly selected as 'second most' important included all of those frequently selected as 'most important', but issues such as 'the decline in wildlife habitat' (11.0%), 'road traffic congestion' (9.7%) and 'plastic pollution' (6.5%) were also frequently selected.
- 7.28 Very few respondents picked 'visitor numbers' or 'too much land set aside for wildlife' as one of their top three most important issues facing the AONB.
- 7.29 Other concerns raised that were not on the list of issues included five mentions of the Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station as well as species disturbance from hunting with dogs and litter, air and water pollution.

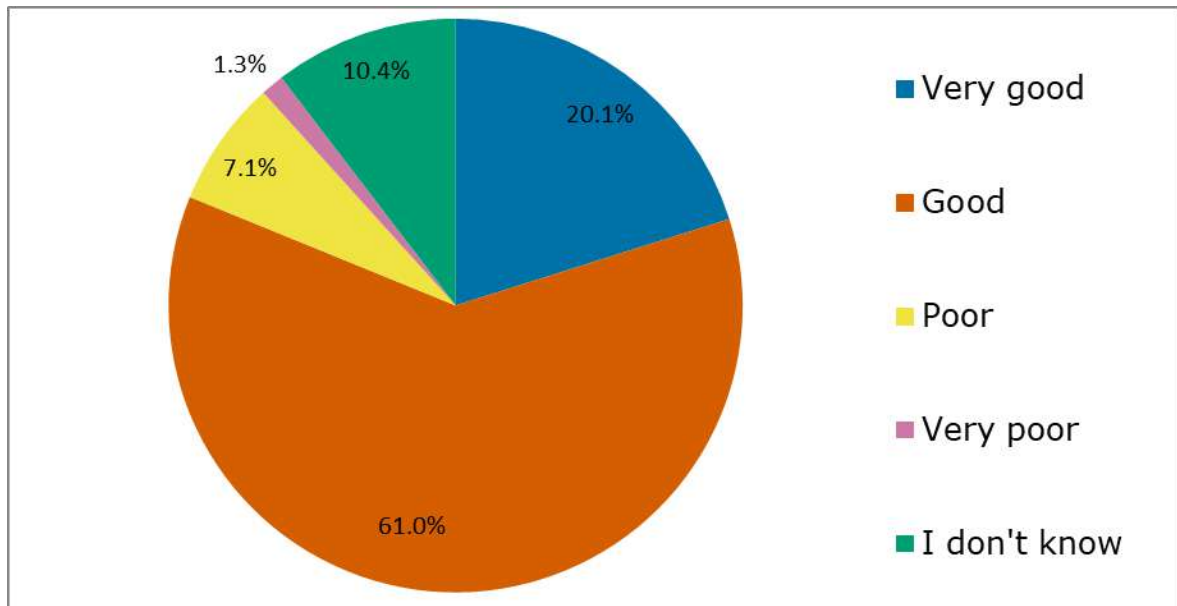
Figure 7.13: Most significant issues affecting the AONB



Source: Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19)

- 7.30 Most respondents accepted there was a coordinated approach in place for the management of the AONB, with 15.0% agreeing it is working well and 32.7% saying it 'is coordinated but could work better'. A large proportion of the respondents did not know if there is a coordinated approach. This suggests that there is scope for greater awareness raising within the community and amongst visitors with regards to how the AONB is managed.
- 7.31 More than half of respondents stated that the information (e.g. leaflets, information boards, signs etc.) provided by the AONB was 'good', with a further 20.1% said the information was 'very good'. Collectively, 8.4% of responses were negative as shown in **Figure 7.14**.

Figure 7.14: Quality of information provided by the AONB



Source Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Online Visitor Survey (2018/19)

Analysis of indicator: Volunteers in the AONB

- 7.32 The management of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is supported by a team of volunteers. In 2018, there were a total of 174 people regularly volunteering. Collectively, these volunteers committed 143.5 days' worth of time to the AONB. Different volunteer types include those focused on practical conservation, promoted walking routes and coast and estuaries. Volunteering activities include hedge management, walk route surveying, scrub clearance and pond restoration among others. The AONB runs an average of two volunteer work party day events a month.
- 7.33 The AONB uses trained volunteer wardens to help deliver environmental projects and provide support to the AONB team. There were three long-term student placements in 2018 which also support AONB projects including habitat management and AONB objectives.
- 7.34 Large volunteering events are run within in the AONB such as the 2018 Great British Beach clean. The Great British Beach Clean 2018 saw 664 volunteers commit a total of over 800 hours over 24 events. These events resulted in 2,540m of beach being surveyed, filling 68.5 bin bags with 184.1 kg of rubbish. In 2017, Marine Conservation Society Beachwatch surveys saw 806 volunteers collect over 780 kg of litter.

Analysis of indicator: Annual economic impact of tourism

- 7.35 The Economic Impact of Tourism Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB 2017 Report used the Cambridge model (based on data obtained from the Great Britain Tourism Survey, International Passenger Survey and day visits in the Great Britain Day Visitor Survey) to conclude that the annual value of tourism within the AONB (when considering the spending of both overnight and day visitors) to be £210,068,409. This is equivalent to 3,401 jobs with actual tourism related employment at 4,655 jobs. This total value has grown by 6.4% since 2015 from an estimated £197,759,126.

Data sources

- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB online visitor survey 2018/19 – LUC
- The Economic Impact of Tourism Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB- 2017 Report
- Volunteer time records by Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Recommendations

- The AONB, partners and statutory bodies with a responsibility for the AONB should continue to record data on the level of volunteer engagement in the protected landscape.
- There should be regular engagement with people about the England Coast Path to provide an opportunity for their concerns to be raised and addressed and to raise awareness of the route.
- The AONB should conduct an update to the visitor survey every five years.
- The AONB should continue to monitor the economic impact of tourism as increased tourism may result in higher levels of traffic and increased demand for accommodation and recreation facilities.
- Large events such as Latitude Festival (held at Henham Park) provide an opportunity to promote the rest of the AONB to a wide audience.

8 Summary Headlines



8 Headline findings and next steps

Headline findings

- 8.1 A summary of headline findings for each of the themes/sub-themes is included here, along with recommendations for future monitoring.

Landscape Character

Landscape character context

- The whole of the AONB lies within National Character Area (NCA) 82: Suffolk Coast & Heaths.
- The Suffolk County Landscape Character Assessment identifies 11 different landscape character types within the AONB.
- There are also three local and regional Landscape Character Assessments which include parts of the AONB.

The coastline and seascapes

- The entire length of the coastline within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is defined as Heritage Coast.
- The coastline of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is covered by SMP7: Lowestoft Ness to Felixstowe Landguard Point.
- The bathing water quality of the two designated bathing sites in the AONB has declined since 2015.

Agricultural Landscape Character

- Crops and bare fallow is the most common agricultural land use, accounting for over half of the farmland (54.5%) in the AONB.
- The majority of farm holdings are classified as general cropping.
- The number of all livestock animal species between 2008 and 2016 reduced in number, except for sheep which increased slightly (5.8%) Poultry numbers decreased significantly between 2008 and 2009 and have not recovered.
- 16,194.1 hectares (39%) of the AONB was managed as part of an agri-environment scheme at the end of 2018. The majority of this was managed under an Environmental Stewardship agreement (15,906 ha), while 288 hectares was managed under Countryside Stewardship.
- Over a third (34.3%) of agricultural land is Grade 4 (poor quality) according to the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification.

Woodland cover and management

- Woodland covers a total of 6,352 hectares or 15.7% of the AONB.
- The most common woodland type is coniferous 2,970 hectares or 46.8% of all woodland areas, while 45.4% (or 2,887 hectares) is broadleaved.
- Ancient woodland comprises 316.5 hectares (1%) of the AONB.
- 66% of woodland in the AONB is actively managed according to the Forestry Commission's *England Managed Woodland Headline Performance Indicator*.
- 18 hectares of woodland and 62 individual trees are managed as part of Environmental Stewardship Schemes.

Settlement and planning

- Of the 16,712 dwellings in the AONB, 41.7% are detached and 30.9% are semi-detached.
- The component local planning authorities received a total of 816 planning applications in the AONB in 2018.
- In the area covered by Babergh Mid Suffolk Local Planning Authority, the majority of planning applications were for alterations, conversions or extensions.
- Two Local Plans cover parts of the AONB area; neither have been adopted at the time of this report.
- Six neighbourhood plans have been adopted for settlements in the AONB.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 28.7% of the AONB is internationally/nationally designated for its nature conservation importance.
- Of the SSSIs within the AONB, the majority of units are in Unfavourable-Recovering condition (46%) or Favourable condition (41%).
- BAP Priority Habitats are widespread, with 35.2% of the AONB (14,251 hectares) identified as being a priority habitat. The most common BAP Priority Habitat is coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (3,256 ha).

Geodiversity

- There are 16 SSSIs in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB that are identified for their geological features, including three which are designated for both geological and biological value.
- 88% of geological SSSI units were in a good or recovering condition (favourable or unfavourable recovering) in 2017.

Historic Environment

- There are 39 Scheduled Monuments within the AONB which cover a total area of 77 hectares.
- There are two Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens in the AONB; covering a total of 383.9 hectares.
- The AONB contains 677 Listed Buildings; 17 Grade I, 43 Grade II* and 617 Grade II.
- 11 Conservation Areas are located wholly or partially within the AONB and cover a total area of 459.1 hectares.
- There are a total of 5,148 HER records within the AONB.
- Ten heritage features within the AONB are on the Heritage at Risk Register. Frequent issues relating to the condition and management of heritage features include arable ploughing and decay/lack of maintenance.
- 316.2 hectares (1%) of the AONB is managed for archaeological/historic features through agri-environment schemes.

Socio-economic profile

- The estimated population within the AONB in 2017 is 32,095; a 2.7% increase in the five years since 2012.
- The gender split of the population is relatively equal, with males comprising 49.5% of the population and females comprising 50.5%.
- The population of the AONB is ageing, with people aged 60-69 forming the largest age group.
- Population density is low, particularly in the wider context of south east England. The majority of the AONB contains less than ten people per hectare.
- Levels of deprivation in the AONB tend to be moderate on a national level.

Tourism in the visitor economy

- Annually, tourism in the AONB is estimated to be worth £210,068,409, a 6.4% increase since 2015.
- There are a total of 660 kilometres of public rights of way and 4,168 hectares of open access land within the AONB.
- The majority of visitors surveyed stated that the natural environment of the AONB was their most valued feature of the landscape.
- In 2018, there were a total of 174 people regularly volunteering. Collectively, these volunteers committed 143.5 days' worth of time to the AONB (excluding BeachWatch volunteers).

Next steps

- 8.2 The outcome of the analysis from this State of the AONB Report reveals a combination of forces for change on the nationally protected landscape of Suffolk Coast & Heaths. These include the impacts of climate change, which may lead to increased coastal erosion as a result of severe weather events and may also impact on the composition of plant communities. Erosion is likely to impact on semi-natural habitats, heritage features and the landscape/seascape. It may also result in the introduction of new/larger scale coastal defences which could impact on the nationally

designated landscape. Data to monitor these potential changes should be collected over the Management Plan period.

- 8.3 Recreation/tourism is an important source of income for businesses in the AONB and the value of tourism has increased by 6.4% between 2015 and 2017 to over £210 million. Increases in tourism revenues are positive in terms of the economy of the AONB, however challenges associated with increased levels of tourism include the proliferation of low-paid, seasonal jobs, increased traffic, demand for new facilities (accommodation and visitor attractions/activities) and wildlife disturbance, particularly in protected areas. The State of Nature Report (2016) highlighted recreational disturbance as a key issue in both heathland and coastal areas.
- 8.4 A number of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are planned within or close to the AONB. These include the Sizewell C power station and offshore wind developments which will significantly impact the visual and perceptual qualities of the AONB.
- 8.5 Other key changes in the near future relate to land management. The UK leaving the EU will result in (currently unknown) changes to agri-environment schemes. The ongoing designated landscapes review may also result in changes to how protected landscapes are managed which are also currently unknown. Recent austerity measures in the public sector have also affected funding to protected landscapes and other bodies including Natural England. Reduced funding to Natural England may result in a reduction in the amount of monitoring data available to AONBs.
- 8.6 The health and wellbeing benefits of areas such as the AONB are well documented. The majority of visitors to the AONB travel by private car and the lack of public transport options may restrict the access of more deprived communities to the AONB. The AONB should work with partners to improve accessibility of the AONB so that the positive impacts of the AONB on physical and mental health can be experienced by a larger range of people. Volunteering provides an opportunity for local communities to get engaged with the management of the nationally important asset of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB.
- 8.7 This document sets out a series of recommendations for future monitoring to inform future State of the AONB report, which will provide a robust evidence base to underpin Management Plan policies with specific and achievable objectives to preserve and enhance the nationally designated landscape.

Appendix 1: Visitor Survey Questions 2018/19

Question 1*

This privacy statement sets out the basis on which Land Use Consultants Limited ("LUC") may use your personal data in respect of this survey.

You acknowledge that:

- your personal data submitted or collected under or in connection with this consultation ("Personal Data") will be processed pursuant to this statement. The Personal Data might include your name, address, IP address, contact details (including email address) and any opinions that you include in response to the survey;
- once you have provided your Personal Data to LUC, LUC have a legitimate interest in utilising that Personal Data to review, analyse and produce reports in respect of the survey. LUC will use your Personal Data solely for the purpose of the survey and for no other purpose;
- LUC may share the Personal Data with select third parties involved with the survey (such as LUC's clients and other consultants and professional advisors involved in the consultation);
- LUC will store, process and retain your Personal Data only for as long as is necessary, and otherwise in accordance with data protection law;
- LUC may transfer your personal data outside the European Economic Area (EEA), but only to known data processors where those data processors make use of server storage outside the EEA and with whom LUC has a binding data protection agreement; and
- LUC will only retain your personal data for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for. To determine the appropriate retention period for personal data, we consider the amount, nature, and sensitivity of the personal data, the potential risk of harm from unauthorised use or disclosure of your personal data, the purposes for which we process your personal data and whether we can achieve those purposes through other means, and the applicable legal requirements. LUC may anonymise your personal data (so that it can no longer be associated with you) for research or statistical purposes in which case we may use this information indefinitely without further notice to you. You have legal rights regarding the Personal Data (including the right to request access to, or the correction of, your personal data).

If you have any questions, or if you wish to exercise your rights over your Personal Data, you may contact LUC at 43 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD or database@landuse.co.uk.

If you wish to make a complaint regarding the treatment of your Personal Data, you may contact the Information Commissioner's Office ("ICO"). The ICO is the UK's supervisory authority for data protection issues and further details (including further details of your legal rights over your Personal Data) can be found at www.ico.org.uk.

I acknowledge and agree to the above terms

Question 2. What is your age?

- Under 16
- 16 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 - 55
- 56 - 65
- 66 - 75
- 76 - 85
- Over 85
- I'd prefer not to say

Question 3. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- I'd prefer not to say

Question 4. What is your postcode? Please include the space e.g. XXX XXX

Question 5. Which AONB do you visit/go to/live in?

- Dedham Vale. Selecting this option will take you to the questions just for this AONB.
- Suffolk Coast & Heaths. Selecting this option will take you to the questions just for this AONB.
- Both. Selecting this option will take you to the questions for the Dedham Vale AONB. You can then choose whether to answer questions for Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB following this.
- Neither

Question 6. For which reasons do you not visit either AONB? Please select all that apply.

- No means of transport
- Don't have time
- Too far away
- More interested in visiting other places
- Other (please specify)

Question 7. Did you know before this survey that the Dedham Vale area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)?

- Yes
- No

Question 8. How did you first hear about the Dedham Vale AONB?

- I saw one of the AONB's publications
- I read about the AONB in a magazine/newspaper
- On social media
- Word of mouth
- Through this survey
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

Question 9. How often do you spend time in the Dedham Vale AONB?

- Daily - I live here
- Daily - I don't live here but visit daily
- A few times a week
- Once a month
- Once every 2 - 3 months
- Once every 6 months
- Once a year
- Less frequently than once a year

Question 10. What brings you to the Dedham Vale AONB?

- I am a part-time resident
- I am a day visitor from home
- I am on holiday
- I visit friends and family
- I work here
- I visit on business
- Other (please specify)

Question 11. How do you usually travel to the Dedham Vale AONB?

- By bicycle
- By coach tour
- By foot
- By private motor vehicle (car, motorbike, van etc.)
- By public transport (bus, train)
- Other (please specify)

Question 12. How far do you usually travel to get to the Dedham Vale AONB?

- 10 miles or under
- 11 - 15 miles
- 16 - 30 miles
- Over 31 miles

Question 13. How long do you usually stay for?

- less than 1 hour
- 2 - 4 hours
- 5 hours to 1 day
- 1 - 2 days
- Up to a week
- Between a week and a fortnight
- More than two weeks
- Not applicable

Question 14. What type of accommodation do you usually stay in?

- With friends/relatives
- Caravan/camping
- Pub/Inn
- B&B
- Hotel
- Activity/training centre
- Hostel
- Second home
- Self catering (holiday cottage/airbnb)
- Other (please specify)

Question 15. What activities do you enjoy doing in the Dedham Vale AONB? Please tick as many answers as you like.

- Appreciating the scenery and views
- Water activities (boating, sailing, canoeing, swimming etc.)

- Cycling
- Walking
- Driving to go sightseeing
- Fishing
- Studying nature/bird watching
- Visiting a town or village
- Visiting a pub/tea shop
- Horse riding
- Guided walks
- Shopping
- Painting
- Visiting an RSPB reserve/site
- Visiting another wildlife site
- Visiting a National Trust property
- Visiting an English Heritage Site
- Visiting another heritage site
- Visiting another attraction e.g. museum,
- Gallery
- Other (please specify)

Question 16. Dedham Vale AONB has a number of designations within it to conserve landscape, wildlife habitats and species. Please tick all the ones you are aware of.

- Local Nature Reserve
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Ramsar
- County Wildlife Sites
- I am not aware of any of these designations

Question 17. Which THREE features of the Dedham Vale AONB are most important to you?

| | Most important | Second most important | Third most important |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Peace and quiet | | | |
| Strong community identity | | | |
| Good place for business | | | |
| Wildlife | | | |
| Nature environment | | | |
| Places to shop | | | |
| Places to visit | | | |
| Places to eat/drink | | | |
| Walking opportunities | | | |
| Nice place to live | | | |
| History | | | |
| Other | | | |

Question 18. What do you think are the most significant issues affecting the landscape and wildlife of the Dedham Vale AONB? Rank the THREE most significant issues.

| | Most significant | Second most significant | Third most significant |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Climate change | | | |
| Flooding from severe weather | | | |
| Access to the countryside e.g. quality of footpaths | | | |
| Future changes to regulations or funding | | | |
| Noise pollution | | | |
| Road traffic congestion | | | |
| Water pollution | | | |
| Light pollution/maintaining dark skies | | | |
| Pressure from new development | | | |
| Decline in quality of wildlife habitat | | | |
| Changing agricultural practices | | | |
| Plastic pollution | | | |
| Visitor numbers | | | |
| Too much land set aside for wildlife | | | |
| Dogs off leads | | | |
| Other | | | |

Question 19. How important do you think it is to conserve wildlife in the AONB?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important

Question 20. What do you think about the information available to visitors in the Dedham

- Vale AONB? E.g. leaflets, information boards, signs etc.
- Very good
- Good
- Poor
- Very poor
- I don't know

Question 21. Do you think people who live, work and visit the Dedham Vale AONB have a responsibility to care for the area?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Question 22. Do you think it is important that local businesses are involved in looking after the Dedham Vale AONB?

- Yes it is very important
- Yes but not essential
- No it is not important
- Don't know

Question 23. Do you think there are enough opportunities for you to help look after the Dedham Vale AONB?

- Yes, I feel involved
- I know about the opportunities but choose not to get involved
- No, more opportunities are needed
- I didn't know there were any opportunities to get involved
- 24. Which of the following activities do you participate in?
- Practical Conservation Volunteering
- Litter picks
- Conferences and events
- Other (please specify)

Question 25. Do you think there is a coordinated approach to looking after the Dedham Vale AONB and is it working?

- Yes, it is coordinated and working well
- Yes, it is coordinated but could work better
- No
- Don't know

Question 26. If you also visit the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, would you like to answer questions about this area as well?

- I visit the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and yes I would like to answer questions about this area.
- I visit the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB but I would not like to answer questions about this area.
- This will take you to the end of the survey.
- I don't visit the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. This will take you to the end of the survey.

Question 27. Did you know before this survey that the Suffolk Coast & Heaths area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)?

- Yes
- No

Question 28. How did you first hear about the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB?

- I saw one of the AONB's publications
- I read about the AONB in a magazine/newspaper
- On social media
- Word of mouth
- Through this survey
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

Question 29. How often do you spend time in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB?

- Daily - I live here
- Daily - I don't live here but visit daily
- A few times a week
- Once a month
- Once every 2 - 3 months
- Once every 6 months
- Once a year

- Less frequently than once a year

Question 30. What brings you to the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB?

- I am a part-time resident
- I am a day visitor from home
- I am on holiday
- I visit friends and family
- I work here
- I visit on business
- Other (please specify)

Question 31. How do you usually travel to the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB?

- By bicycle
- By coach tour
- By foot
- By private motor vehicle (car, motorbike, van etc.)
- By public transport (bus, train)
- Other (please specify)

Question 32. How far do you usually travel to get to the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB?

- 10 miles or under
- 11 - 15 miles
- 16 - 30 miles
- Over 31 miles

Question 33. How long do you usually stay for?

- less than 1 hour
- 2 - 4 hours
- 5 hours to 1 day
- 1 - 2 days
- Up to a week
- Between a week and a fortnight
- More than two weeks
- Not applicable

Question 34. Did you know before this survey that the Suffolk Coast & Heaths area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

- Yes
- No

Question 35. What type of accommodation do you usually stay in?

- With friends/relatives
- Caravan/camping
- Pub/Inn
- B&B
- Hotel
- Activity/training centre
- Hostel
- Second home
- Self catering (holiday cottage/airbnb)
- Other (please specify)

Question 36. What activities do you enjoy doing in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB? Please tick as many answers as you like.

- Appreciating the scenery and views
- Water activities (boating, sailing, canoeing, swimming etc.)
- Cycling
- Walking
- Driving to go sightseeing
- Fishing
- Studying nature/bird watching
- Visiting a town or village
- Visiting a pub/tea shop
- Horse riding
- Guided walks
- Shopping
- Painting
- Visiting an RSPB reserve/site
- Visiting another wildlife site
- Visiting a National Trust property
- Visiting an English Heritage Site
- Visiting another heritage site

- Visiting another attraction e.g. museum,
- gallery
- Other (please specify)

Question 37. Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB has a number of designations within it to conserve landscape, wildlife habitats and species. Please tick all the ones you are aware of.

- Local Nature Reserve
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Ramsar
- National Nature Reserve
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- County Wildlife Site
- I am not aware of any of these designations

Question 38. Which THREE features of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB are most important to you?

| | Most important | Second most important | Third most important |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Peace and quiet | | | |
| Strong community identity | | | |
| Good place for business | | | |
| Wildlife | | | |
| Nature environment | | | |
| Places to shop | | | |
| Places to visit | | | |
| Places to eat/drink | | | |
| Walking opportunities | | | |
| Nice place to live | | | |
| History | | | |
| Other | | | |

Question 39. What do you think are the most significant issues affecting the landscape and wildlife of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB? Rank the THREE most significant issues.

| | Most significant | Second most significant | Third most significant |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Climate change | | | |
| Flooding from severe weather | | | |
| Access to the countryside e.g. quality of footpaths | | | |
| Future changes to regulations or funding | | | |
| Noise pollution | | | |
| Road traffic congestion | | | |
| Water pollution | | | |
| Light pollution/maintaining dark skies | | | |
| Pressure from new development | | | |
| Decline in quality of wildlife habitat | | | |
| Changing agricultural practices | | | |
| Plastic pollution | | | |
| Visitor numbers | | | |
| Too much land set aside for wildlife | | | |
| Dogs off leads | | | |
| Other | | | |

Question 40. How important do you think it is to conserve wildlife in the AONB?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important

Question 41. What do you think about the information available to visitors in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB? E.g. leaflets, information boards, signs etc.

- Very good
- Good
- Poor
- Very poor
- I don't know

Question 42. Do you think people who live, work and visit the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB have a responsibility to care for the area?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Question 43. Do you think it is important that local businesses are involved in looking after the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB?

- Yes it is very important
- Yes but not essential
- No it is not important
- Don't know

Question 44. Do you think there are enough opportunities for you to help look after the

- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB?
- Yes, I feel involved
- I know about the opportunities but choose not to get involved
- No, more opportunities are needed
- I didn't know there were any opportunities to get involved

Question 45. Which of the following activities do you participate in?

- Practical Conservation Volunteering
- Beachwatch - Beach litter picks
- Conferences and events
- Other (please specify)

Question 46. Do you think there is a coordinated approach to looking after the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and is it working?

- Yes, it is coordinated and working well
- Yes, it is coordinated but could work better
- No
- Don't know

Question 47. Since 2016, Natural England have been speaking to local people about the new England Coast Path National Trail. Which of these best describes your views on this national project?

| | Fully supportive | Quite supportive but with some concerns | Not supportive at all | Don't know |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| The concept of the England Coast Path | | | | |
| The route it may take | | | | |
| Please explain your answer (optional) | | | | |

End of Survey