

Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm Landscape Character Assessment Documents

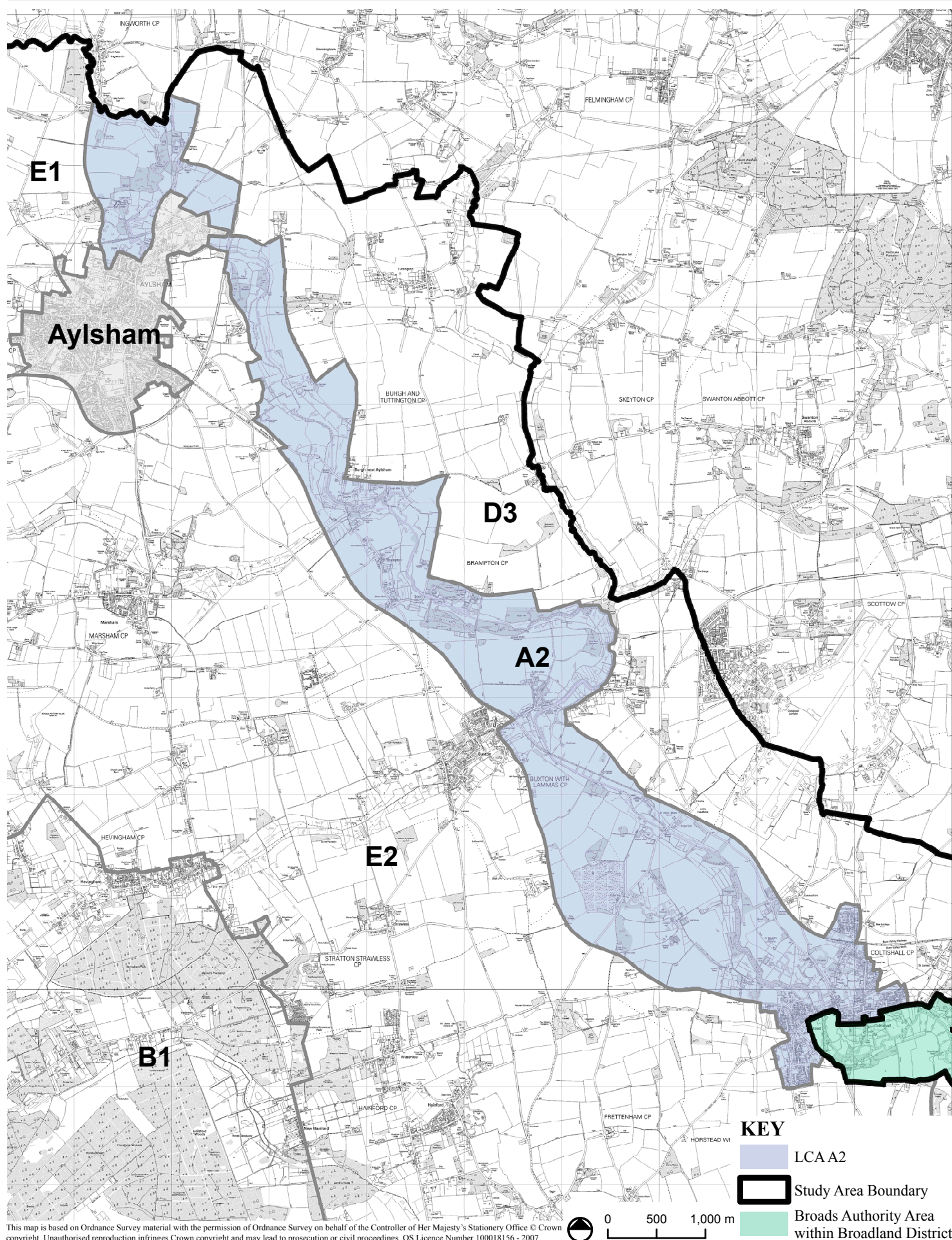
1. Broadland District Council Part 3 of 5

Applicant: Norfolk Vanguard Limited
Document Reference: ExA; ISH; 10.D3.1E 1.3
Deadline 3

Date: February 2019

Photo: Kentish Flats Offshore Wind Farm





Evaluation

Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

3.4.30 The following inherent landscape sensitivities have been identified:

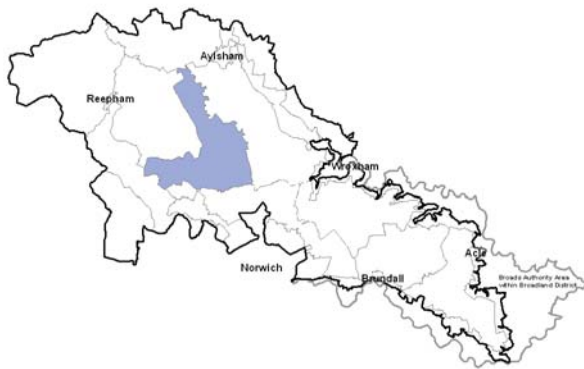
- Natural meandering course of the River Bure (~~SSSI/SAC~~) and associated floodplain habitats provide a valuable biodiversity resource; [Downstream of Wroxham, the River catchment is part of the Bure Broads and Marshes SSSI/ SAC.](#)
- Diverse, mature landscape structure including blocks of wet woodland, mature trees and intact hedgerows;
- Mosaic of grassland and grazing marsh with blocks of wet woodland that punctuate valley floor, contribute to a generally unified corridor of open space that leads to the north western part of Broads Authority Area;
- Sense of intimacy and enclosure in central and southern parts;
- Sense of openness in northern parts;
- Distinctive character of small villages, comprising buildings that reflect use of locally sourced materials;
- Landscape setting of village churches, mills and historic manors;
- Traditionally managed grassland on the valley floor and related strong pastoral and historic character, contributes to an overwhelming sense of place;
- Strong sense of peace and tranquillity along the river valley floor;
- Its strength of character and diversity.

Landscape Planning Guidelines

3.4.31 The following Landscape Planning Guidelines apply to the River Bure Landscape Character Area:

- Seek to conserve the strong, predominantly rural character of the area and related strongly recognisable sense of place.
- Seek to ensure the sensitive location of development involving tall structures (such as telecommunication masts and wind turbines for example) in relation to prominent skyline locations both within the area and within adjacent character areas.
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of existing villages;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of village churches, mills and historic manor houses;
- Seek to conserve the strong sense of openness in northern parts where long views can be seen along the valley floor;
- Seek to ensure that potential new small-scale development within the villages is consistent with existing settlement pattern, density and traditional built form;
- Seek to ensure that potential new developments comprise a fully integrated landscape and urban design strategy, which is consistent with the local landscape character and screen potential harsh settlement edges;
- Seek to promote use of local materials in new buildings;
- Seek to conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity and peace along the valley floor;
- Seek to conserve and enhance the setting of churches within historic villages and maintain their position as key landscape features.

3.5 B: WOODLAND HEATH MOSAIC



Location and Boundaries

- 3.5.1 This Landscape Type extends north through the centre of the District, the north of Norwich. Its entire southern and eastern boundary adjoins Wooded Estatelands (Landscape Character Type E). To the west, this landscape borders Tributary Farmland (Landscape Character Type D).

Key Characteristics

- 3.5.2 The following Key Characteristics are typical of the Woodland Heath Mosaic Landscape Character Type:
- Generally flat, plateau landscape, covered with a pattern of large-scale woodland and plantations;
 - Mixture of old deciduous woodland and more recent coniferous plantations, interspersed with small areas of remnant heathland contained within the woodland;
 - Woodland is interspersed with relatively large arable fields;
 - Presence of boundary oaks within hedgerows;
 - Underlying geology of sands and gravels, overlain by infertile sandy soils;
 - General absence of settlements, other than sporadic 20th century settlements that line straight roads, which cut across the landscape;
 - Views are generally strongly contained by dense blocks of woodland;
 - Woodland provides a strong sense of enclosure.
 - [Small pockets of Acid grassland \(National Vegetation Classification category U4\) within heathland mosaic.](#)

Summary of Visual Character

- 3.5.3 This Landscape Character Type has a flat to gently sloping topography; forming a simple, plateau landscape. There are generally few variations in topography, other than where small streams or becks cross the landscape, causing minor indentations in the surrounding plateau. The underlying geology is dominated by a series of sands and gravels, which are overlain by

infertile, sandy soils. These soils have strongly influenced the resulting land cover of this Landscape Character Type.

- 3.5.4 As a result of the generally infertile soils, traditionally, this landscape was not sought for conversion to agriculture, and was therefore heath covered. During the 17th and 18th centuries, a series of large estates began to dominate the landscape, introducing a series of large-scale woodlands and plantations. This landscape changed again, at the time of the Enclosure Acts, when was divided into large rectangular blocks and converted to arable farmland.
- 3.5.5 Current land cover is dominated by a mixture of large-scale old deciduous woodlands and more recent coniferous plantations, which provide an intermittently strong sense of enclosure within the landscape. These geometric, woodland blocks often limit views across the landscape. Pockets of arable fields and small areas of remnant heathland are also a feature, culminating in a patchwork landscape pattern.
- 3.5.6 There is a general absence of settlements within the Woodland Heath Landscape Character Type other than a scattering of 20th century settlements that line roads, which slice through the landscape. Small-scale industrial units and isolated twentieth century residential developments are also a feature. The strong, pattern of straight roads, which interlock and cross this landscape tend to dominate landscape pattern. In combination with the regular and angular nature of many of the plantation edges, the resulting landscape has a strong geometric nature and feel.

Historic Environment Character

- 3.5.7 Although there is little evidence of early settlement within the Woodland Heath Mosaic Type, remains of several prehistoric barrows exist; two being found on Horsford Common. Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age occupation is also represented by recorded findspots of items such as Neolithic flint axes and flint extractions or later Bronze Age metalwork.
- 3.5.8 Evidence of Roman occupation is again limited to findspots however Early Medieval presence is reflected in upstanding earthworks such as the Norman motte and bailey of Horsford Castle.
- 3.5.9 By the Iron Age, open agricultural landscapes were widespread in this Character Type and by 1750 a mixture of open fields and enclosures, with some woods and heath occurred. Parliamentary enclosure was to change the pattern of fields when it was introduced; the earliest example of which was around Felthorpe prior to 1793. Today's landscape pattern is influenced by its agricultural history with a mixture of 18th – 19th century enclosures, 20th century agriculture, heath and large patches of woodland. Ancient replanted woodlands, which by definition have to have pre 1650s origins, are scattered across this Character Type.
- 3.5.10 More recently the landscape has been influenced by World War I and World War II activity with some new build, such as pillboxes and some temporary conversions such as Felthorpe Hall, which was converted into a Red Cross Hospital during World War I.

- 3.5.11 The settlement pattern generally scattered and consists of linear villages that line straight roads, which cut across the landscape. Farms are dotted about the villages that have retained some of their character with a mix of old and new houses. Vernacular dwellings are mostly constructed of red or colour-washed brick, or a mixture of brick and flint or brick and timber frame. Small manor houses, many with moats suggest a medieval origin, highlighting the settled nature of the landscape.

Ecological Character

- 3.5.12 The ecological character of this landscape character type is dominated by the following habitats²⁶:

- Dry acidic heathland
- Wet heathland with acidic flushes – several are characterised by the (highly unusual) presence of alkaline flushes or fens (e.g. Buxton Heath) and hence are referred to as 'valley fens' (and which are recognised in the European designation of the Valley Fens (SAC). Because they have a European designation, it could be argued that the alkaline flushes should be considered the most significant sites.
- Fen
- Birch and alder woodland (including ancient woodland habitat)
- Scrub
- Bracken
- Rough grassland
- Ponds

- 3.5.13 The Nature conservation value of these habitats is recognised by the following designations:

- Swannington Upgate Common Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Buxton Heath Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) also a component unit of Norfolk Valley Fens (SAC)
- Cawston Heath and Marsham Heath Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- County Wildlife Sites for their importance in terms of biodiversity (NWT Count Wildlife handbook ,2011)

Key Forces for Change

- 3.5.14 The following Key Forces for Change have been identified for the Woodland Heath Mosaic Landscape Character Type:

- Agricultural intensification, which may lead to a loss of mature field boundaries;
- Decline in traditional woodland management leading to weakening in condition of ancient woodlands;
- Pressure for linear expansion of settlement along the rural roads, and new development changing the traditional relationship of settlements with adjacent landscapes;

²⁶ Swannington Upgate Common Site of Scientific Interest (English Nature)

- Pressure to upgrade roads through additional kerbing and signage to accommodate an increase in traffic volume;
- Changes in woodland cover as a result of changes in land management.

Evaluation

Landscape Condition and Strength of Character

- 3.5.15 Strength of character varies throughout this Landscape Character Type. In places, there is a strongly recognisable sense of place as a result of views to adjacent Landscape Character Types. In others, however, due to the intermittent sense of enclosure provided by woodland, views are limited and sense of place is weaker. Overall, there is a strong landscape pattern as a result of the geometric arrangement plantation woodlands and the generally straight road network. Blocks of mature woodland are generally in good condition, however, there is evidence of decline at edges and also in the hedgerow network, which is gappy in places.

Management Strategies and Objectives

- 3.5.16 The overall strategy for the Woodland Heath Mosaic should be to conserve and enhance the mature blocks of woodland and patches of remnant heathland, which have strong biodiversity value and are recognisable landscape features. There are also opportunities for restoration of hedgerow field boundaries and replacement mature hedgerow trees where these have been lost. [Plantings to enhance hedges should be appropriate to the specific local character of the Landscape Character Areas. For more information refer to 'Planting hedges in Norfolk – maintaining regional character; A guide to restoring and planting hedges' \[www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/reports/\]\(http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/reports/\)](#)
- 3.5.17 Specific management objectives are to:
- Seek to conserve and enhance woodland, wood pasture and heathland and associated wetland habitats, which represent areas of high biodiversity importance with a wide range of habitats;
 - Conserve remnant areas of heathland and take opportunities to extend these;
 - Seek opportunities for the creation of larger areas of heathland;
 - Encourage sustainable woodland management of the varied woodlands using traditional techniques such as coppicing where appropriate to maintain historic and ecological interest;
 - Encourage new woodland edge planting of native deciduous broadleaved to reduce the visual and ecological impact of the coniferous plantations;
 - Encourage the use of native tree species in new planting, which reflects the underlying soil conditions [and maintaining regional character](#) ;
 - Seek to conserve and enhance existing mature landscape structure and related high landscape and ecological value;
 - Seek to conserve remnant patches of heathland and fen within interior parts of the woodland, which are of high ecological value and contribute to a sense on time-depth within the landscape
 - [Seek to Buffer the SAC Valley Fen component units, Booton Common SSSI and Buxton Heath SSSI is also desirable.](#)

- 3.5.18 Within this Landscape Character Type, only one Landscape Character Area has been defined within the District:

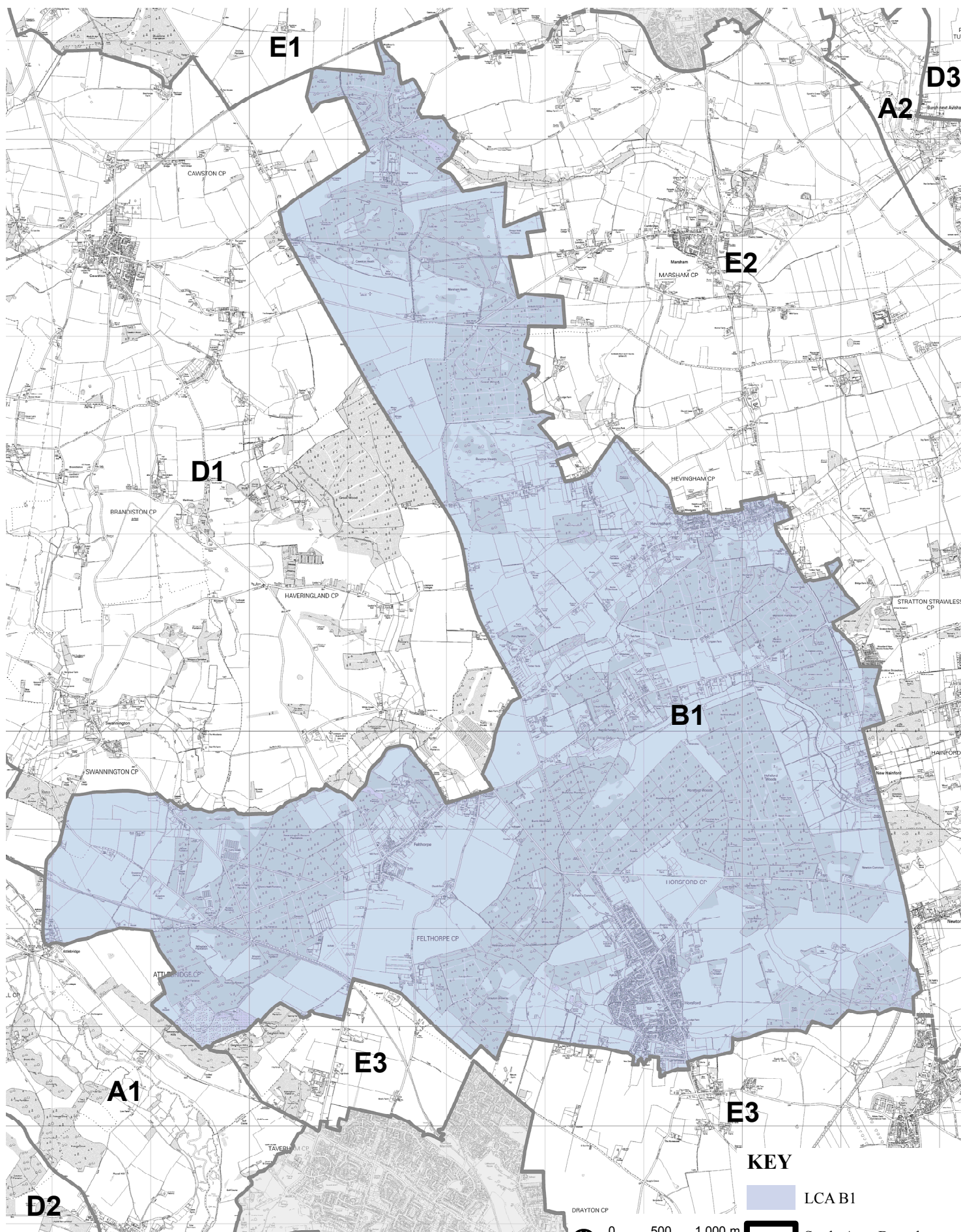
B1: Horsford

- 3.5.19 A summary of the area's visual character, inherent landscape sensitivities and landscape planning guidelines are set out below.

B1: HORSFORD

Summary of visual character

- 3.5.20 Extending northwards through the centre of the District, this character area comprises a simple plateau landscape, encompassing the gentle upper side slopes of the River Bure. Apart from the minor undulations where tributaries of the River Bure and Wensum cut into the slope, there are few variations in topography. The area was once entirely covered by heathland, never sought for conversion to farmland, due to the infertile nature of the soils. North western parts have been encroached by large 17th and 18th century estates; using the land for large scale woodlands and plantations. Further encroachment occurred as a result of the Enclosure Acts, during this time land was divided into large rectangular blocks and converted to arable farmland. Today, the area is a mixture of arable farmland, old deciduous woodland and recent coniferous plantations. Only small remnant patches of heathland and fen are found within interior parts of the woodland, often protected by European designations for their high ecological value. Large rectangular arable fields abut the woodland in northern and southern parts of the area. Woodland cover is more intermittent in central parts, and small arable fields are interspersed with small-scale industrial units and isolated 20th century residential developments.
- 3.5.21 Due to limited agricultural activity, few settlements have developed here in the past and settlements are mostly located on the edge of the area. Development is mostly restricted to a scattering of twentieth century residences along straight roads that traverse through the area. Many of these dwellings reside on individual plots of rough grassland amid blocks of woodland. Views are strongly contained by woodland, often forming close horizons. From outside the area, woodland is prominent within views, forming distinctive wooded horizons. There are wide and expansive easterly views out from the edge of this area, across the gently sloping land that falls away to the Bure valley. A network of footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways traverse the area, including a national trail west of Horsford (Marriott's Way). The plantations provide an important recreational resource for the public in the District.



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Evaluation

Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

3.5.22 The following inherent landscape sensitivities have been identified:

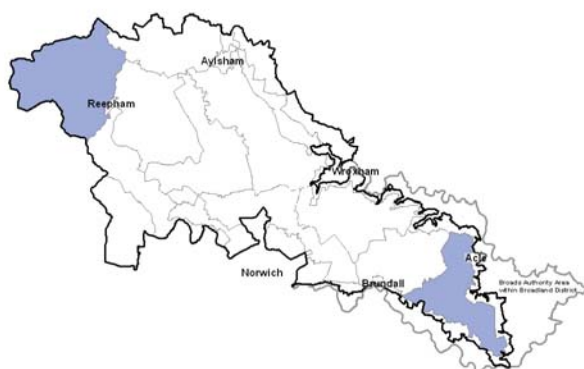
- Mature landscape structure, including extensive blocks of deciduous and plantation woodland, providing close horizons and a strong sense of enclosure in places.
- Remnant patches of heathland and fen within interior parts of the woodland.
- SSSI protected habitats.
- Coherent, small-scale settlement density and pattern.
- Landscape setting of seventeenth and eighteenth century estates.
- Extensive blocks of woodland within the area contribute to distinctive wooded horizons viewed from the wider landscape.
- Wide and expansive views out from the edge of this area to the Bure valley.

Landscape Planning Guidelines

3.5.23 The following Landscape Planning Guidelines apply to Horsford Woodland Heath Mosaic Landscape Character Area:

- Seek to ensure the sensitive location of development involving tall structures (such as telecommunication masts and wind turbine for example) in relation to prominent wooded skyline locations both within the area and within adjacent character areas;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of seventeenth and eighteenth century estates;
- Seek to ensure any new development considers the effect on wide and expansive views from the edge of this area to the Bure valley;
- Seek to conserve the sparse settlement pattern characteristic of the area;
- Seek to ensure that potential new developments comprise a fully integrated landscape and urban design strategy, which is consistent with the local landscape character and screen existing and potential harsh settlement edges.

3.6. C: PLATEAU FARMLAND



Location and Boundaries

- 3.6.1 There are two separate locations of this Landscape Character Type within the District. The first is located in the far west²⁷ and its eastern boundary borders Wooded Estatelands (Landscape Character Type E), Tributary Farmland (Landscape Character Type D), the River Wensum Valley (within Landscape Character Type A), and the settlement edge of Reepham. The second occurrence is located in the far eastern part of District – bound to the north, east and south by Marshes Fringe (Landscape Character Type G); which forms a transition zone between the elevated plateau edge and the Broads river valley marshes. Its western boundary meets the Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Type D.

Key Characteristics

- 3.6.2 The following Key Characteristics are typical of the Plateau Farmland Landscape Character Type:
- Distinct flat and elevated landform in comparison to surrounding landscapes;
 - Underlying geology of Till deposits;
 - Large fields of predominantly arable monoculture farmland;
 - Sense of openness and exposure due to elevation and scarcity of enclosing elements such as woodland;
 - Small ponds are often a feature of fields;
 - Presence of boundary oaks within hedgerows;
 - Long and expansive views of adjacent landscapes;
 - Predominantly rural character and associated strong sense of tranquillity throughout;
 - Sparsely settled landscape;
 - Presence of isolated historic features within the landscape;

²⁷ This landscape continues outside the District boundary to the west, within Breckland District. For further information see *Landscape Character Assessment of Breckland District, May 2007 (Breckland District Council and LUC)*.

- Small ponds and marl pits are often features of fields lying on clayey and chalky Till;

Summary of Visual Character

- 3.6.3 Occurring at the eastern and western edges of the District, this Landscape Character Type forms an elevated plateau of landscape, which is predominantly underlain by Till deposits, with associated loamy, clay soils at the surface. Both occurrences of the Plateau Farmlands Landscape Character type overlook surrounding lower landscapes, however there is some variation in the overall elevation of the eastern and western plateaus. In the west, the Plateau Farmlands form the highest area of land within the District, rising to a height of approximately 60M AOD. The eastern plateau is much lower in comparison (approximately 20M AOD), yet it forms an elevated plateau above the Broads to the east.
- 3.6.4 Land cover is dominated by predominantly arable farmland. Field sizes vary from medium to large and in places field are delineated by a network of hedgerows. There is, however, evidence of loss of field boundaries as a result of extensive agricultural intensification. Woodland cover is generally absent, other than occasional small clumps of mixed or deciduous trees. The resulting landscape has a simple pattern, which results from the lack of visual clutter and few enclosing vertical elements. Sense of openness is generally strong, and in places, open, long-distance views can be gained across adjacent Landscape Character Types.
- 3.6.5 Settlement pattern is sparse, consisting of occasional small linear settlements, which have developed along the network of minor roads, and scattered farmsteads. Traditional brick and tile farmhouses are often a feature of the local vernacular character. There is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout much of this Landscape Character Type, particularly towards the west of the District, where often, traffic comprises local village traffic and agricultural machinery working the fields. As such, the landscape often feels peaceful.

Historic Environment Character

- 3.6.6 Prehistoric evidence within this Character Type is restricted to archaeological findspots, Late Neolithic and Early Bronze barrows and an Iron Age excavated settlement site. Evidence of Roman occupation is limited again to excavated evidence and it is not until the Early Medieval period that major monuments which can still be seen in the landscape today, were constructed, such as churches. Other landscape evidence of previous occupation is that of placenames, for example, Tyby echoes the possibility of a viking settlement having once been present.
- 3.6.7 By the Iron Age, open agricultural landscapes were widespread in the Plateau Farmlands and in the early 14th century, arable cultivation dominated. Parliamentary enclosure was generally introduced between 1793-1815 and the field boundaries and pattern it created are still visible in parts of the Plateau farmlands. Today's field pattern is predominantly 20th century agriculture, although fragmented 18th - 19th century enclosures are present along with some inland managed wetland, following river corridors.

Ancient and semi-natural woodlands and ancient replanted wood are dotted around Strumpshaw.

- 3.6.8 The Plateau Farmland Type has a sparsely settled landscape of predominantly medium linear villages and dispersed farmsteads. Lingwood though is a large nucleated village that has retained historic character with some 17th and 18th century houses and a 14th-century Church. Vernacular dwellings within this Character Type are generally made of red brick, colour-washed brickwork and on occasion are timber framed. Prevalence for thatched roofs is apparent. Most farms are small, simple dwellings. A few that have been extended during prosperous periods in the past are more characteristic of the manors and halls further west. The absence of any major roads in the area further accentuates the isolated, rural character of the Plateau Farmland Type.
- 3.6.9 An example of a village which occurs within this Type is Freethorpe, which has remained much unaltered in appearance and style for over 800 years. The village dates back to at least the 11th century and is home to a number of 16th and 17th century buildings. Following the "Great Fire of Foulsham" in 1770, many new houses were built which were superior in size and appearance to the houses they replaced and now contribute greatly to the character of the village.

Ecological Character

- 3.6.10 The ecological character of this landscape character type is dominated by the following habitats:
- Scattered small copses of woodland
 - Hedgerow network
- 3.6.11 The Nature conservation value of these habitats is recognised by the following designations:
- South-western boundary abuts Folxley Wood SSSI
 - County Wildlife Sites

Key Forces for Change

- 3.6.12 The following Key Forces for Change have been identified for the Plateau Farmland Landscape Character Type:
- Potential farm diversification, resulting in conversion of agricultural buildings to houses and recreational facilities;
 - Potential loss of mature hedgerow field boundaries as a result of agricultural intensification;
 - Small-scale, incremental development within villages, which may be inconsistent with local built character and materials (such as brick and tile);
 - Potential wind turbine developments;
 - Infilling of small pits, ponds and extraction sites.

Evaluation

Landscape Condition and Strength of Character

- 3.6.13 The condition of hedgerows varies throughout this Landscape Character Type, with evidence of decline in several places. Recognisable sense of place is not particularly strong, resulting from the generally simple landscape pattern with vertical visual focal points within the landscape. Open views to adjacent Landscape Character Types can, however, be gained from the edges of this Landscape Character Type, providing orientation.

Management Strategies and Objectives

- 3.6.14 The overall strategy for Plateau Farmland should be to conserve existing hedgerows, field and hedgerow tree and enhance and restore where lost. The generally simple landscape pattern, with open views to adjacent Landscape Character Types should also be conserved. [Plantings to enhance hedges should be appropriate to the specific local character of the Landscape Character Areas. For more information refer to 'Planting hedges in Norfolk – maintaining regional character; A guide to restoring and planting hedges' \[www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/reports/\]\(http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/reports/\)](#) . Specific Management Objectives are to:

- Seek opportunities for the creation of mixed habitats of grassland and scrub/ woodland in the woodland core area;
- Consider opportunities for providing buffering the River Wensum (SAC) from diffuse pollution inputs through catchment sensitive farming;
- Seek to conserve the hedgerow network as a recognisable landscape feature and wildlife corridor and restore and enhance where gappy;
- Seek to establish arable field margins as potential nest sites from ground nesting birds and habitats for small mammals.

- 3.6.15 Within this Landscape Character Type, the following Landscape Character Areas have been defined:

C1: Foulsham and Reepham

C2: Freethorpe

- 3.6.16 A Summary of each area's visual character, inherent landscape sensitivities and landscape planning guidelines are set out below.

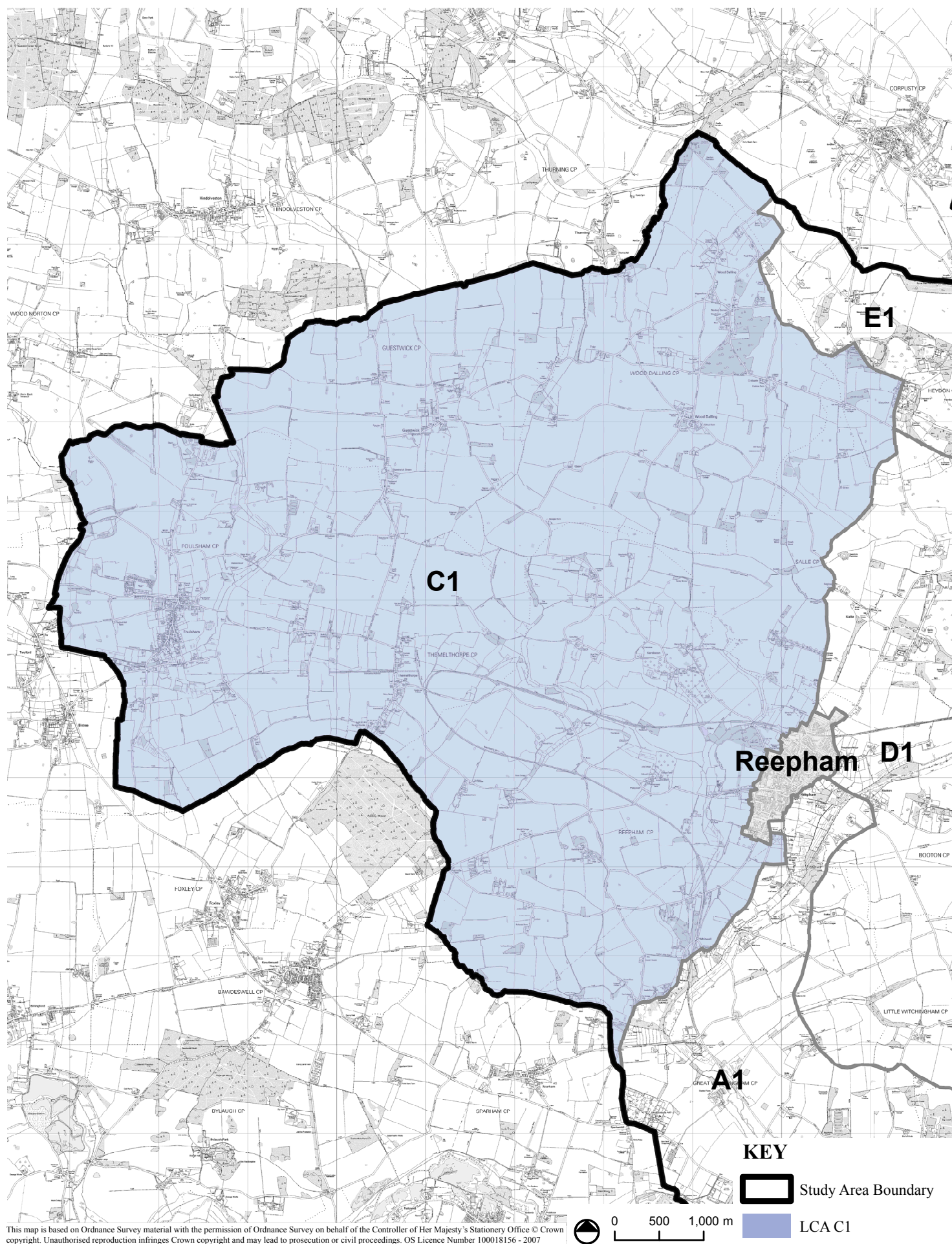
C1: FOULSHAM AND REEPHAM

Summary of visual character

- 3.6.17 This character area is situated on an elevated plateau of Till in the far west of the district. The plateau forms the highest area of land in the District, rising to a height of approximately 60M AOD around Guestwick. The Till deposits above a chalk bed are distinct within the surrounding sand and gravel geology. This creates a gently domed plateau, slightly more undulating along its eastern edge. Above this clay bed, loamy / clay soils

provide good quality agricultural land. Farming has a long established tradition in this area; indicated by irregular shaped fields and a complex network of lanes and ancient tracks. Field sizes vary from medium to large, the largest located on the highest land. An exception is a distinct area to the south west, near Foulsham, where small strip fields are strongly enclosed by tall hedgerows. This field system may represent early enclosure of common land adjacent to Foxley Wood.

- 3.6.18 There is little woodland cover in the area. Small copses located in field corners are scattered across the landscape particularly in eastern parts. Some hedgerows have been lost, with remnant hedgerow trees suggesting they may have been removed relatively recently due to the intensification of farming techniques. Numerous fields have small ponds in the corner, characteristic of heavier soils. These ponds may suggest past use of the fields for grazing. In south eastern parts, the meadows, marshes and woodland associated with Eyn Brook valley (A1) provide a distinct contrast to the area, south of Reepham. North of Reepham, the area meets Cawston Tributary Farmland (D1) and Blickling and Oulton Wooded Estate lands (E1).
- 3.6.19 Few settlements have developed on the plateau, except the medieval market town of Foulsham and some dispersed settlements such as Guestwick, Wood Dalling and Themelthorpe. These are ancient settlements that have suffered from falls in population in the past. Individual isolated farmsteads are scattered throughout the area; most with small, simple dwellings. Manors and halls are a feature within western parts of the area. These are commonly associated with farmsteads that have been extended during prosperous periods in the past. Moats adjacent to these dwellings may suggest a medieval origin. Minor roads and tracks create an irregular and interesting pattern on the landscape. In the north-west, localised rationalisation of the field system and the development of an airfield have somewhat diluted its character.
- 3.6.20 Higher relief in this area creates an elevated, open character. This is further accentuated by the simplicity of land use and limited woodland cover. Expansive views and a general absence of any major roads heighten the general feeling of rural isolation. Larger farmsteads, halls and church towers create essential and striking vertical features in wide expansive views. Movement on the plateau is limited to traffic along secondary roads and rural lanes as well as agricultural machinery working the fields. Such a traditional working landscape often feels peaceful and there is a strong associated sense of tranquillity throughout.



Evaluation

Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

3.6.21 The following inherent landscape sensitivities have been identified:

- Open character with wide expansive views across the farmland towards landmark churches.
- Simple landscape structure with little woodland cover and small copses located in field corners and recognisable hedgerow structure.
- Distinctive field pattern and related sense of time-depth in the landscape near Foulsham.
- Strong historic structure indicated by irregular shaped fields and a complex network of lanes and ancient tracks.
- Landscape setting of manors, halls and churches.
- Dispersed small-scale settlement pattern with individual isolated farmsteads scattered throughout the landscape.
- Strong sense of peace and isolation throughout the area.
- Strong rural character and sense of continuity.

Landscape Planning Guidelines

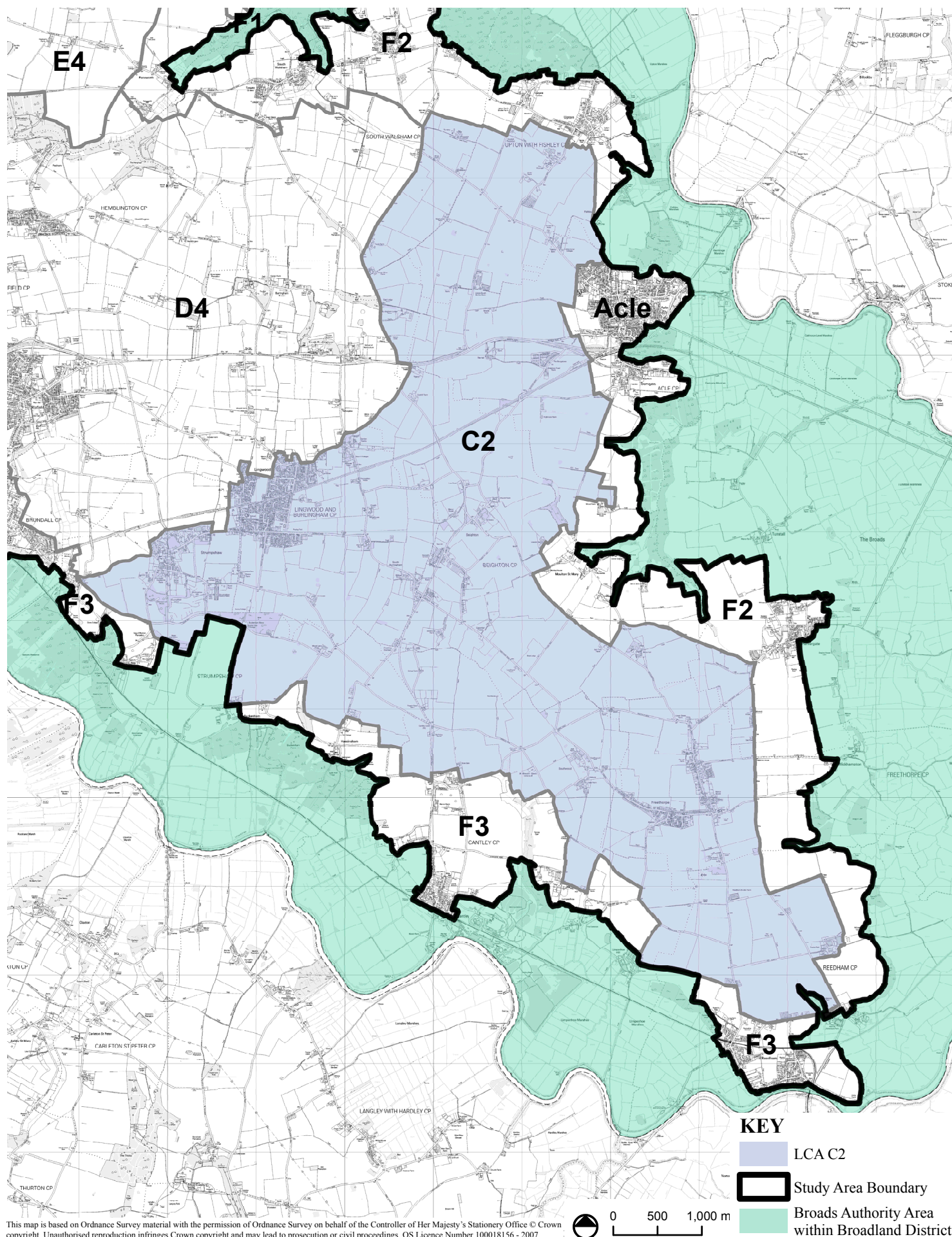
3.6.22 The following Landscape Planning Guidelines apply to Foulsham and Reepham Plateau Farmland Mosaic Landscape Character Type:

- Conserve subtle features of the historic landscape, such as ancient tracks, lanes and irregular shaped fields bound by intact hedgerows, which if not protected and vulnerable to change and loss;
- Resist new development that would result in any diminution of the sparsely settled nature of the area or in any reduction in the sense of peace and isolation within the area, which is devoid of large settlements;
- Seek to conserve the strong, rural character of the area and related sense of unity.
- Seek to conserve the distinct pattern of fields and related mature landscape structure, especially near Foulsham, which strongly contributes to a sense of time-depth within the landscape.
- Seek to ensure new development does not reduce the vertical significance of architectural features within the landscape, such as church towers;
- Seek to conserve open views across the farmland;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of manors, halls and churches;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of existing villages, such as Foulsham, Reepham, Guestwick, Wood Dalling and Themelthorpe;
- Seek to ensure that potential new developments comprise a fully integrated landscape and urban design strategy, which is consistent with the local landscape character and screen potential harsh settlement edges;
- Seek to conserve small pits, ponds and extraction sites;
- Seek opportunities for the restoration of hedgerows;
- Seek to conserve the historic and visual connection between manors, farmsteads and associated moats.

C2: FREETHORPE

Summary of visual character

- 3.6.23 Situated in the far east of the District, this character area is bound to the north, east and south by the Marshes Fringe (G2) at the edge of the Broads. Landform within this character area is low lying, rising to a height of no more than 20m AOD. However, surrounded by land that falls below sea level, it sits as an elevated plateau above the Broads. Where the land falls away towards the broads, sands and gravels are exposed on the slopes. The plateau falls away steeply to the east and the south at the Marshes Fringe, which forms a distinct boundary with the Broads Authority Area.
- 3.6.24 The area's historical mapping shows numerous irregular lanes, individual farmsteads, small copses and groves; indicating a strong agricultural past. However, massive intensification of farming in the area, has changed the landscape dramatically. Today it is still used entirely for agricultural production of crops and root vegetables. The hedgerow structure within the area has been substantially fragmented, leaving vast fields that sweep across the landscape. Further north, field sizes become smaller and minor valleys provide interest and variation. Woodland is situated along the slopes that define the Broads (G2), and along the valleys farmed by the minor tributaries that cut into the area.
- 3.6.25 Other than Lingwood, there are few settlements within this landscape that have been engulfed by the rapid expansion in modern suburban housing. Lingwood has evolved from several crossroads and the Norwich to Great Yarmouth railway. Although linear development along Norwich Road has nearly joined Lingwood and Strumpshaw, Lingwood has remained contained as an individual nucleated settlement. Ancient dispersed hamlets, grouped around a manor house and pond, are still evident. Ribbon development settlements are located at the top of wooded slopes overlooking the broads. Isolated farmsteads have a traditional character with brick and tile farmhouses, high-pitched roofs and huge brick barns.
- 3.6.26 The large arable fields that sweep across the plateau, together with limited hedgerows and woodland cover creates a simple, and often barren landscape. The land appears to fall away at the edge of the Broads, accentuating the feeling of exposure and elevation. There are expansive views across this landscape. Local churches form distinct features within the rural landscape, and assume significance within an otherwise featureless landscape. Views of the Broads are obscured for the most part by the woodland along the slopes, creating a strong but low horizon with huge skies.



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Evaluation

Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

3.6.27 The following inherent landscape sensitivities have been identified:

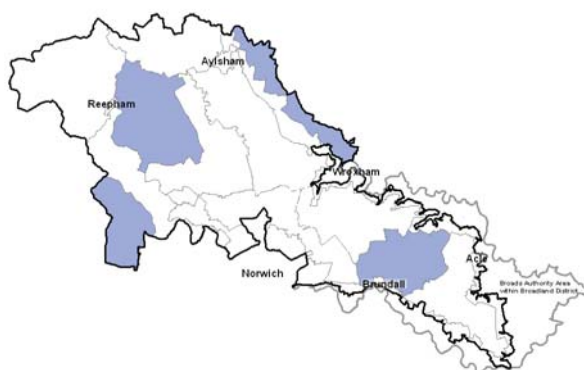
- Predominantly open, rural character.
- Sparse settlement in the form of ancient dispersed hamlets and isolated farmsteads. Their landscape setting and cohesive building materials is vulnerable to unsympathetic additions or extensions, which would disrupt the largely intact built character.
- Subtle features of the historic landscape, such as ponds, pits, hedgerows and tracks, which are not protected, and are vulnerable to change and loss.
- Landscape setting of manor houses, halls and churches.
- Wide expansive views over a vast and simple landscape with sweeping arable fields and huge skies.
- Exposed character in peripheral parts with partial views over descending wooded slopes to the Broads, and associated strong but low horizon.
- Smooth, predominantly uninterrupted skyline.
- Sense of peace and isolation throughout the area.

Landscape Planning Guidelines

3.6.28 The following Landscape Planning Guidelines apply to the Freethorpe Plateau Farmland Landscape Character Type:

- Seek to conserve the open, rural character of the area;
- Resist new development that would result in any diminution of the sparsely settled nature of the area or in any reduction in the sense of peace and isolation within the area, which is devoid of large settlements;
- Seek to conserve subtle features of the historic landscape, including hedgerows and tracks;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of manor houses, halls and churches;
- Seek to maintain key views towards churches, which are often key landscape features;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of Lingwood;
- Seek to ensure new development does not disrupt the smooth, predominantly uninterrupted skyline within the area;
- Seek to conserve open views across the farmland;
- Seek to maintain the traditional character of isolated farmsteads;
- Seek opportunities for the restoration of hedgerows where fragmented;
- Seek to ensure that potential new developments comprise a fully integrated landscape and urban design strategy, which is consistent with the local landscape character and screen potential harsh settlement edges;
- Seek to conserve small pits, ponds and extraction sites.

3.7 D: TRIBUTARY FARMLAND



Location and Boundaries

- 3.7.1 There are four separate locations of this Landscape Character Type within the District. The first is located in the central western part of the District – Part of its western boundary is defined by the settlement edge of Reepham. The second is located in the central eastern part of the District – bound by Wooded Estatelands (Landscape Character Type E) to the west, Tributary Farmlands to the east (Landscape Character Type D) and Marshes Fringe to the north and south. Located to the east of Norwich, the third occurrence of this Landscape Character Type includes a pocket land south of the River Wensum (within Landscape Character Type A), and encompasses the Tud River valley. The fourth location forms a linear belt of land along the District's northern boundary, northeast of the River Bure (within Landscape Character Type A)²⁸.

Key Characteristics

- 3.7.2 The following Key Characteristics are typical of the Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Type:
- [The Witton Run is a tributary of the River Yare SSSI near Blofield](#)
 - Shelving and gently undulating landform, which is cut by small tributary valleys;
 - Predominantly rural character throughout;
 - Landscape predominantly underlain by sands and gravels, overlain by loamy soils;
 - Dispersed but evenly distributed settlement pattern
 - An intricate network of narrow, winding rural lanes often bounded by banks or ditches
 - Medium to large scale arable farmland;
 - Pockets of remnant parkland;
 - Tributaries elusive- evident but usually hidden within the landscape by topography and trees

²⁸ This Landscape Character Type continues outside the District within Breckland, North Norfolk and South Norfolk Districts.

- Mixed settlement and architectural character;

Summary of Visual Character

- 3.7.3 This Landscape Character Type is predominantly underlain by a mixture of sand and gravels, which give rise to light and sandy soils. In places, pockets of Till are apparent, and where the Tributary Farmland occur in close proximity to the River Valley Landscape Character Type (A), fertile, loamy soils prevail.
- 3.7.4 There are gentle variations in the topography of this Landscape Character Type, where a series of small tributary valleys cut through the underlying topography and form landscape and nature conservation features. These tributary corridors are subtle features, which are often barely perceptible to the eye within views across the landscape.
- 3.7.5 This landscape has a predominantly rural character, which is heightened by the dispersed settlement pattern of small to large linear and medium to large nucleated settlements. It is accessed via a series of small, often narrow lanes, which are often bounded by banks or ditches. Small ponds are also a feature of fields, within this predominantly arable agricultural landscape.
- 3.7.6 Pockets of parkland add further visual interest, and introduce an ordered, human influence. Typical views from the edges of this Landscape Character Type, are often into adjacent river valleys, however in several places, views are limited by small clumps of trees, or subtle variations in topography.

Historic Environment Character

- 3.7.7 Palaeolithic to Iron Age occupation sites are represent in the Tributary Farmland Type by restricted and isolated findspots although additionally barrows are still visible in today's landscape. Evidence is limited despite the fact that by the Iron Age open agricultural landscapes were widespread in the tributary farmlands, due to the relatively temporary nature of buildings during prehistory.
- 3.7.8 Again Roman and Early Medieval, presence is only reflected in recorded objects, such as coin hoards, metalworkings or pottery kilns. By the early 14th century, arable cultivation dominated. It is recorded that between 1500-1750 that the tributary farmlands were a patchwork of landuses with intensive arable agriculture in extensive open fields, smaller enclosures, woods, heaths, cattle and cereal (especially wheat) or bullocks, dairies and sheep. Parliamentary enclosure took place predominantly between 1793 and 1815, which had a huge influence on field pattern and shape. However, today, the field pattern is predominantly 20th century in origin with some fragmented 18th – 19th century enclosures remaining along with, woodland blocks and inland managed wetland following river corridors. Ancient and semi-natural woodland as well as ancient replanted woods are present in the vicinity of Hemblington and Cawston.

- 3.7.9 Pockets of parkland also speckle this Character Type such as that of 18th century Salle Park, registered as Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest.
- 3.7.10 The settlement pattern is dispersed but evenly distributed, containing small to large linear and medium to large nucleated villages of mixed architectural character. Vernacular architecture is dominated by red brick, colour-washed brick and flint and brick with some timber frame buildings.

Ecological Character

- 3.7.11 The ecological character of this landscape character type is dominated by the following habitats²⁹:

- Species-rich chalk grassland
- Scrub
- Mixed woodland on river valley slopes
- Plantation woodland
- Bracken Heath
- Marshy Grassland
- Ponds
- Copes of mature trees
- Hedgerow network

- 3.7.12 The Nature conservation value of these habitats is recognised by the following designations:

- Alderford Common Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Key Forces for Change

- 3.7.13 The following Key Forces for Change have been identified for the Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Type:

- Potential farm diversification, resulting in conversion of agricultural buildings to houses and recreational facilities;
- Potential loss of mature hedgerow field boundaries as a result of agricultural intensification;
- Small-scale, incremental development within villages, which may be inconsistent with local built character and materials;
- Potential wind turbine developments;
- Extension of road corridors and introduction of visually intrusive road signs and visual clutter;
- Potential loss of small ponds and extraction sites due to infill.

Evaluation

Landscape Condition and Strength of Character

- 3.7.14 Overall, condition within this Landscape Character Type varies. In places, hedgerows are well managed and continuous, whilst in other places, a gappy

²⁹ Alderford Common SSSI (English Nature)

and less well managed character is apparent. As a result, overall condition is considered to be moderate. In certain places, recognisable sense of place is strong, as a result of views to landmark features such as churches and into adjacent Landscape Character Types. Overall strength of character is considered to be moderate, although several of the small villages retain their traditional form and exhibit a range of varied local materials.

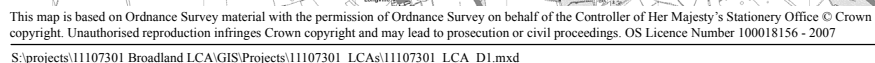
Management Strategies and Objectives

- 3.7.15 The overall strategy for the Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Type should be to conserve and restore the hedgerow network; and conserve the tributary river corridors as important landscape and nature conservation features. [Plantings to enhance hedges should be appropriate to the specific local character of the Landscape Character Areas. For more information refer to 'Planting hedges in Norfolk – maintaining regional character; A guide to restoring and planting hedges' \[www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/reports/\]\(http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/reports/\)](#) .
- 3.7.16 Specific management objectives are to:
- Seek opportunities for the creation of all types of grassland and woodland, especially mixed habitats of grassland and scrub woodland;
 - Seek opportunities for connectivity with Hockering Wood (outside the District);
 - Seek opportunities for the enhancement and creation of wetland habitats, such as wet meadows and wet woodland;
 - Seek opportunities for buffering the Rivers Wensum, Bure and Tud, through catchment sensitive farming;
 - Conserve priority habitats of wood pasture and grassland (based on the existing parks at Salle, Heydon and Blickling);
 - Seek to conserve and enhance the landscape structure within the area, including blocks and copses of woodland, mature parkland trees and intact hedgerows;
 - Seek to conserve and enhance the mature landscape structure in central and eastern parts, including blocks of woodland, which contributes to a small-scale and intimate character.
- 3.7.17 Within this Landscape Character Type, the following Landscape Character Areas have been defined:
- D1: Cawston**
D2: Weston Green
D3: Coltishall
D4: Blofield
- 3.7.18 A summary of each area's visual character, inherent landscape sensitivities and landscape planning guidelines are set out below.

D1: CAWSTON

Summary of visual character

- 3.7.19 Cawston Tributary Farmlands is situated in the central western part of the District, stretching north from the upper Wensum River Valley (A1). The sands and gravels of this area form a gently rolling landscape. The land becomes increasingly undulating where tributaries of the Wensum and the Upper Bure rivers incise it. The loam geology produces fertile soils and the area has a long established agricultural history. The mosaic of parkland, arable fields, woodland, copses of mature trees and clipped hedgerows creates a diverse and interesting landscape character. However, in central parts, the intensification of farming techniques has resulted in hedgerow and woodland losses.
- 3.7.20 Historic maps show a number of medieval market towns located within and adjacent to this area. Some such as Reepham and Cawston have expanded around a strong nucleated core and are busy towns today. Others such as Salle, have declined as the rural population fell or were incorporated into the large estates as 'closed villages'. Today the settlement pattern reflects a long history of development with numerous nucleated settlements and towns. The settlements have many historic buildings and features and a strong local vernacular. To the north, grand houses, estate settlements and churches are distinctive features, and strongly contribute to the area's rich and distinctive character. In particular, Salle Park, a large parkland estate, is a key feature in the northern parts of the area. Developed on poorer soils, the estate is centred on a grand house, and includes landscaped gardens, parkland and plantations. Surrounding medium scale rectangular arable fields represent an extension of the park landscape. Further south, smaller red brick and pantiled manors and halls, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth century litter the landscape. Here, the landscape is smaller in scale and more intimate, but with an equally rich historic character.
- 3.7.21 The diverse collection of landscape features, creates a strong landscape structure, with an interesting visual mosaic. In particular, the large designed parkland landscapes to the north, specifically designed to create an 'idyllic natural landscape' are very scenic. For the most part, the distinctive character of the area remains unspoilt and the arable landscape is well cared for. Historic associations and distinctive features give the area a rich character and a strong sense of place.
- 3.7.22 Loss of hedgerows creates an open skyline in central parts. Vertical elements, including lines of steel pylons that slice through field systems with overhead wiring that connect to an electrical substation west of Cawston, are prominent and repeated skyline features within central parts.



Evaluation

Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

3.7.23 The following inherent landscape sensitivities have been identified:

- Mosaic of parkland, arable fields and woodland, providing a diverse and interesting landscape character.
- Mature landscape structure including substantial blocks of woodland, copses of mature trees and intact hedgerows, providing a robust visual mosaic.
- Historic and architectural landscape features of large seventeenth and eighteenth century estates, including scenic parkland landscapes rich in idyllic components such as rides, parkland trees and lakes.
- Landscape setting of grand houses, manors, estate settlements, churches, and halls.
- Nucleated medieval market towns with a strong historic core.
- Landscape setting of villages.
- Distinctive and largely unspoilt landscape character.
- Rich historic character and a strong sense of place.
- Characteristic views across the farmland to landmark, often isolated, churches.

Landscape Planning Guidelines

3.7.24 The following Landscape Planning Guidelines apply to the Cawston Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Area:

- Seek to conserve the diverse and interesting landscape pattern and character;
- Seek to conserve distinctive, historic features architectural and landscape features including seventeenth and eighteenth century parkland landscapes and their setting, which contribute to the area's rich historic character and strong sense of place;
- Seek to ensure the sensitive location of development involving further tall structure (such as steel pylons and telecommunication masts) in relation to prominent skyline locations both within the character area and within adjacent character areas;
- Seek to ensure that potential new small-scale development within villages is consistent with the existing settlement pattern, density and traditional built form;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of market towns and villages such as Cawston and Salle, and seek to screen (where possible) harsh settlement edges and existing visual detractors (such as the electrical substation);
- Seek to promote use of local vernacular buildings materials, including red brick and pantiles;
- Seek to ensure new development does not reduce the vertical significance of important historical and architectural features within the landscape, such as church towers;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of grand houses, manors, estate settlements, churches, and halls;
- Seek opportunities to restore the hedgerow network where fragmented.

D2: WESTON GREEN

Summary of visual character

- 3.7.25 Located to the east of Norwich, this area encompasses a pocket of land, which is isolated from the rest of the district by the River Wensum. Landform is gently rolling and incised to the south of the narrow valley of the River Tud. The land continues to rise between the two river valleys, forming an elevated plateau, that extends south-west beyond the boundaries of the district. This section of the character area reaches elevations of 60AOD. The topographical variations in this area reflect changes in the underlying geology. Sands and gravels form the rolling hills to the north and west of the area. To the east, heavier Till deposits give rise to the flat plateau relief. The underlying solid geology is exposed in places where the River Tud has eroded through the various drift geology.
- 3.7.26 Mixed woodland, situated on the sand and gravel deposits above the southern slopes of the Wensum Valley, extends south and along the Tud Valley. Interspersed between these plantations, medium-scale fields are in mixed use. Some are in arable cultivation but many are turned over to pig rearing and sheep grazing. Occasional fields have been converted to residential use with associated horticulture. Further west where the woodland cover decreases dramatically, arable fields are medium-sized and rectangular in shape with strongly clipped hedgerows and small copses along boundaries and within fields. On the top of the plateau, field sizes increase and large scale pig and poultry farming predominates.
- 3.7.27 There are few settlements in the area. Some small settlements, often with settlement greens which are illustrated on historic maps, appear to have seen little expansion and many have declined due to falls in population. Much of the land here appears to have been enclosed to form the large estates on the adjacent valley slopes of the Wensum. This has resulted in a limited number of small farmsteads in this area. The A47 cuts through the southern part of this character area along the lower land near the river Tud.
- 3.7.28 The undulating slopes, rolling hills and mature blocks of woodland in the centre and east create a small-scale and intimate landscape, with a settled and unified character. Its diversity of land cover and land uses provide a strong visual mosaic with a robust landscape structure. The Tud valley is a peaceful, rural landscape clearly defined by a broad shallow valley landform. Evidence of the wetland character associated with the Tud is apparent in the areas of wet meadow, grazed pasture and alder carr, although the course of the Tud is largely concealed by wet woodland, with views of the river generally confined to crossing points. To the north west, the fabric of the landscape simplifies. Here, the higher relief, along with fewer variations in land use and reduced woodland cover, creates an open character allowing expansive views across the wooded slopes towards Norwich. Large steel pylons with overhead wiring that slice through fields dominate the skyline in this part. To the south, structure is provided by the numerous close clipped hedgerows and woodland copses, whilst the top of the plateau, large-scale fields, limited tree and hedgerow cover, and the elevated nature of the area create an exposed and less structured landscape. Overall, the area's mix of

land cover elements adds visual interest, creating a diverse rural landscape with a strong sense of visual integrity. With the exception of some localised visual and noise intrusion from the A47, this landscape comprises a unified peaceful character. Isolated churches on the upper valley slopes create prominent and historic built features. Although there are few other features of historic or architectural interest in the area, its distinctive topography and natural features make it a valuable landscape resource.

Evaluation

Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

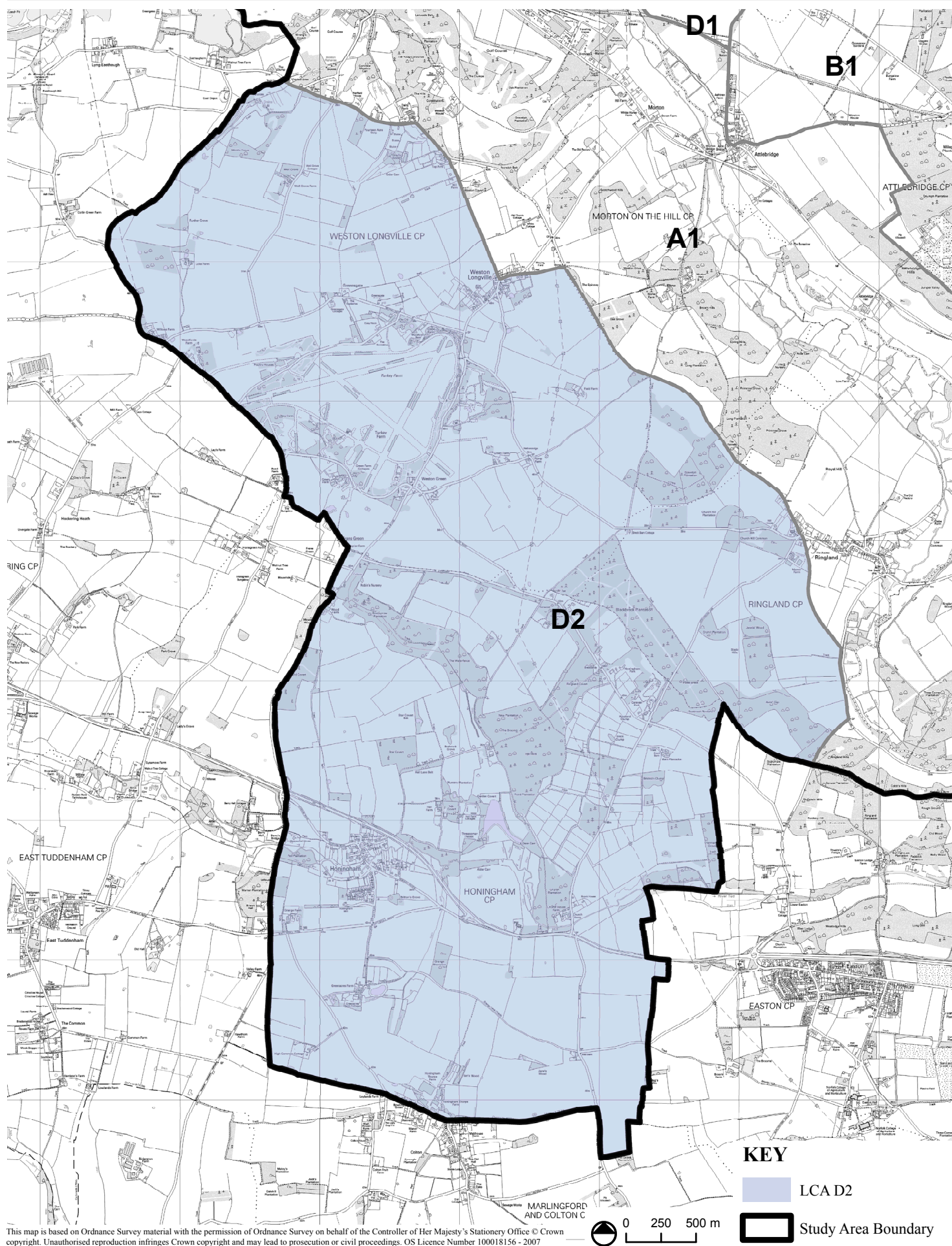
3.7.29 The following inherent landscape sensitivities have been identified:

- Distinctive topography combined with mature blocks of woodland, provides a small-scale and intimate landscape.
- Strong visual mosaic with a robust landscape structure in central and eastern parts.
- Ecological integrity of the Tud valley, including a mosaic of wet woodland, grazing marsh and alder carr along River.
- Sense of peace and strong rural character associated with the Tud Valley.
- Open skyline in plateau areas to the northwest and south.
- Scarce settlement pattern.
- Landscape setting churches and associated characteristic views to their towers.
- Generally unified, peaceful character.
- Diverse rural landscape with a strong sense of place.

Landscape Planning Guidelines

3.7.30 The following Landscape Planning Guidelines apply to the Weston Green Landscape Character Area:

- Resist new development that would result in any diminution of the sparsely settled nature of the area or in any reduction in the sense of peace and isolation within the area, which is devoid of large settlements;
- Seek to ensure that any new small-scale development in or near the edges of Weston Longville and Honingham, responds to the existing settlement pattern;
- Seek to ensure that any new development is small-scale and responds to the historic settlement pattern, setting and traditional building materials;
- Seek to ensure new development does not mask the area's distinctive topography;
- Seek to conserve the landscape setting of churches and associated views to their towers;
- Seek to conserve and enhance the ecological integrity of the Tud Valley and conserve its peaceful, rural character;
- Seek to conserve settlement greens as key features;
- Seek to conserve and manage the structure and appearance of mature woodland blocks.



D3: COLTISHALL

Summary of visual character

- 3.7.31 This character area occupies a narrow belt of land north of the Bure River Valley (A2), situated along the District's northern boundary. Landform within the area rises gently away from the narrow Bure river valley. In the north above Buxton, the character area forms a peninsula of land between the River Bure and a tributary that defines the district boundary at this point. The overlying geology is from the pebbly series. This is covered in a blanket of loam, creating high quality agricultural land, especially to the north. In the south where the loam is thinner, the soils are poorer.
- 3.7.32 Land use within the area is dominated by arable farmland. In the north and extreme south, the high-grade soils have resulted in the intensification of farming techniques. Fields are large and rectilinear, and there is little woodland cover. Mature field trees suggest the removal of hedgerows to increase field sizes. There is, however, still a good network of hedgerows and numerous hedgerow trees within the area. Around Coltishall, poorer agricultural soils have allowed the introduction of varying land uses. Although much of the land is still in arable cultivation, a large area of land is now an RAF base, northwest of Coltishall.
- 3.7.33 Settlements are sparse within this landscape. This is reflected in the sparse road network. Most settlements have developed along the banks of the River Bure, allowing higher land to remain exclusively in agricultural production. There are a few small dispersed settlements such as Tuttington and a scattering of isolated farmsteads. Settlements located at crossing points on the river have, in some cases, expanded in recent years and now encroach onto the edge of this character area, most significantly around Coltishall.
- 3.7.34 Overall, the area comprises a uniform landscape pattern with little diversity and an open character. The area affords wide expansive views to the distant wooded horizons within Horsford Woodland Heath Mosaic (Type B). Some hedgerows have been removed to increase field size but the resulting remnant field trees are key characteristics. Views in to the Bure valley are limited due to the convex nature of its slopes and the tree cover along its length and there is little visual connection between northern and southern parts of the area.