

Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm Landscape Character Assessment Documents

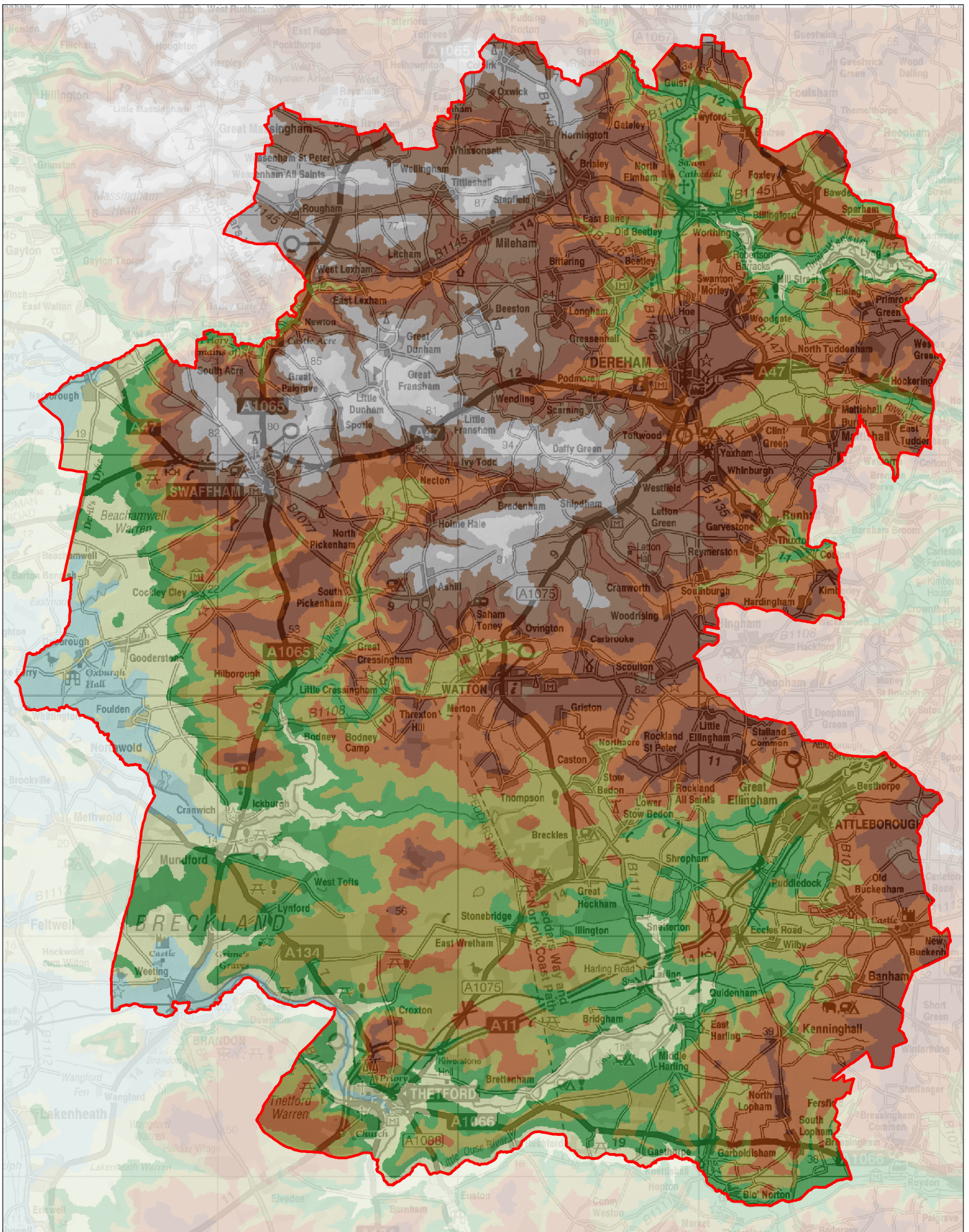
2. Breckland Council Part 2 of 5

Applicant: Norfolk Vanguard Limited
Document Reference: ExA; ISH; 10.D3.1E 2.2
Deadline 3

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



Photo: Kentish Flats Offshore Wind Farm

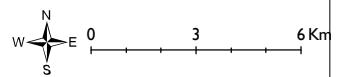




Breckland LCA
Figure 4.2 Topography

Key

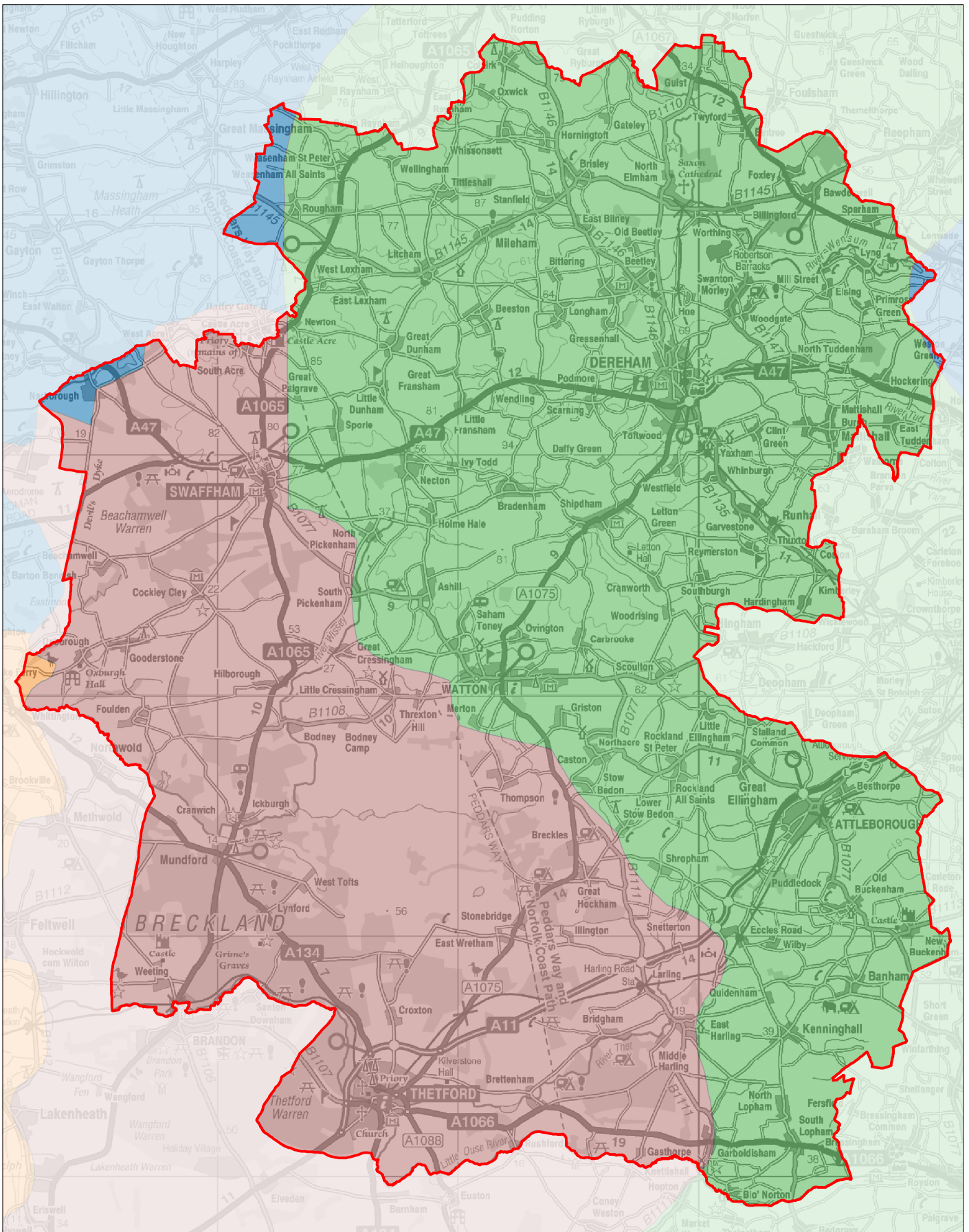
	Breckland Boundary		20 - 30		60 - 70
	0 - 10		30 - 40		70 - 80
	10 - 20		40 - 50		80 - 100
			50 - 60		



Source: Ordnance Survey

Date: 17/01/2007
 Revision: A

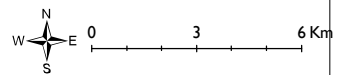




Breckland LCA
Figure 4.3 Natural Areas

Key

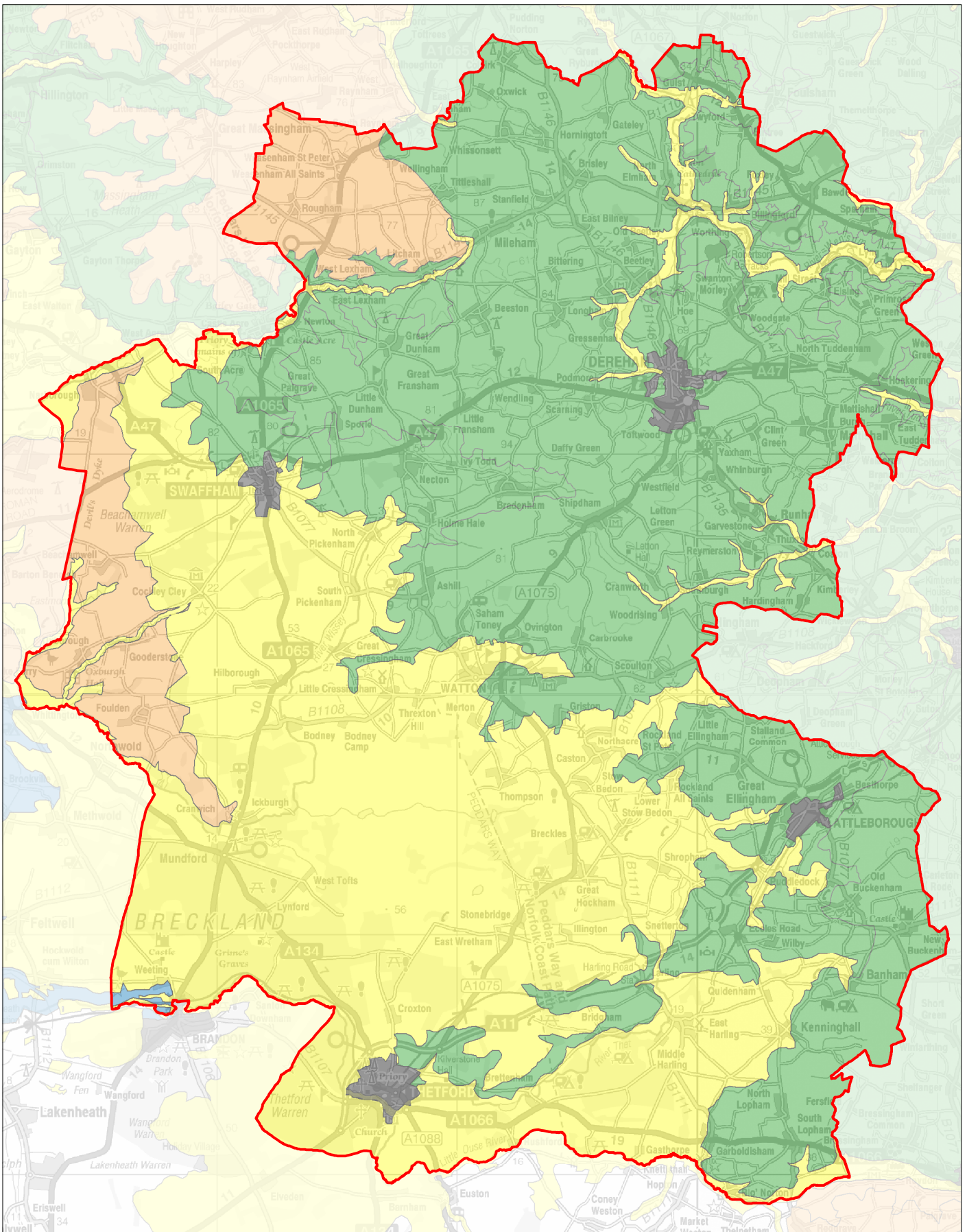
- Breckland Boundary
- East Anglian Plain
- Natural Areas**
- North Norfolk
- Breckland
- The Fens



Source: Natural England

Date: 06/06/2007
 Revision:









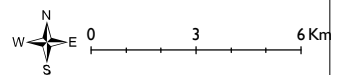


Breckland LCA

Figure 4.4 Norfolk Ecological Network Mapping Project Enhancement Areas

Key

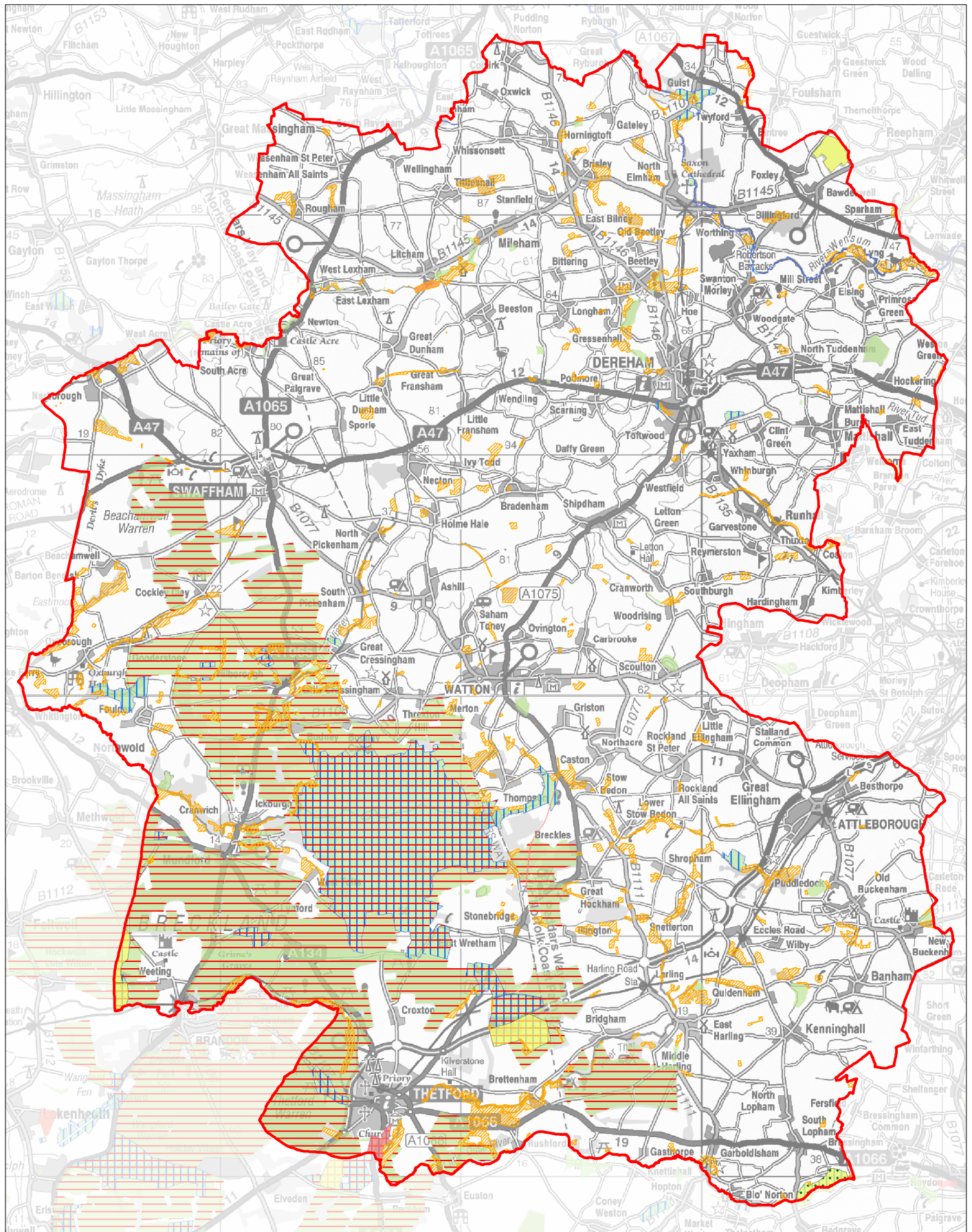
	Breckland Boundary	Enhancement areas
	Urban	 Enhancement - heath, grassland and wood
	Core areas	 Enhancement - wetland creation
	Enhancement area - general	



Source: Norfolk County Council

Date: 06/06/2007
Revision: A

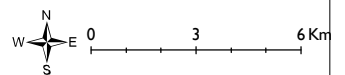




Breckland LCA
Figure 4.5 Nature Conservation Designations

Key

- Breckland Boundary
- SAC
- SPA
- SSSI
- Ramsar
- NNR
- LNR
- County Wildlife sites



Source: Natural England
 Breckland District Council

Date: 06/06/2007
 Revision: A



5. HUMAN INFLUENCES

Introduction

- 5.1. The landscape of Breckland is the product of the interaction of natural and human or anthropogenic processes. Like most areas of Britain, the landscape of the district bears the imprint of successive periods of human habitation and land use. The following chapter provides a brief summary of the past influences on the landscape of Breckland. It builds on the human/anthropogenic processes affecting Breckland as identified in the draft Historic Landscape Characterisation at **Figure 5.1**. The historic designations are illustrated at Figure 5.2.

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

- 5.2. Historically much of Breckland was lime dominated wildwood³, in addition to a mix of acid and calcareous heathland, often in alternating bands or stripes due to the underlying geology. Pollen samples found under Neolithic barrows have also indicated oak forest based soil⁴. The arrival of the first Neolithic peoples (c4500-2000 BC) resulted in the first wood clearances for both agriculture and woodmanship. A number of round burial mounds, barrows and mortuary enclosures are located within the District, often associated with the more elevated heathlands and plateaux, and indicate Bronze Age Activity.
- 5.3. Evidence of the Neolithic flint mining industry, both for arrow heads, weapons and later building materials is visible in the pits at Grimes Graves, within Thetford Forest. The Neolithic flint mines at Grimes Graves are recognised as being of national cultural, historical and archaeological importance.

The Romano-British and the Anglo-Saxon Periods AD43-1066

- 5.4. Much of Breckland was occupied by Boudicea's tribe, the Iceni, around 60 AD, with Thetford, at the confluence of the Rivers Thet and Little Ouse being chosen as the site for the Iceni Royal City, and there is a reconstructed Iceni village at Cockley Cley. There is considerable evidence of Roman occupation within the District, both with the pattern of long straight roads and right angled junctions which form a rectilinear pattern across many of the elevated areas of heathland and parts of Breckland Forest, and also in the number of Romano British sites that have been excavated and recorded within the District, particularly within Thetford Forest.
- 5.5. Of the subsequent Saxon occupation, there remains some evidence. From c800AD North Elmham was the seat of the Bishopric (although this may have been South Elmham, in Suffolk), until the collapse of the See with the Danish invasions. The See lapsed in the 9th Century before being revived c.955. A cathedral stood on the site of the supposed North Elmham Cathedral, the foundations of which stand in the Wensum Valley, from the revival of the See until it was transferred to Thetford in

³ Rackham, O *The History of the Countryside*, JM Dent 1986

⁴ Fairbrother, N *New Lives, New Landscapes* The Architectural Press, 1970

1071. The present ruins are however more probably a Bishop's Chapel of the early Norman era.⁵

- 5.6. A number of villages within Breckland possess parish churches which are substantially Saxon or incorporating Saxon work. Flint continued to be the predominant building material, into the medieval and post medieval eras with knapping and mining being prominent local trades. Breckland flint was later also used to supply the munitions and arms trade as far away as Siam⁶.

Medieval Period 1066-1499

- 5.7. Following the Norman Conquest, landed estates either manorial or monastic began to influence the landscape and land use. Manorial lands were initially associated with Motte and Bailey Castles and later fortified or moated Manor Houses, towards the end of the period (e.g. Oxborough). A number of monastic sites were established within Breckland, either on the site of earlier Saxon foundations or otherwise endowments from new religious orders from continental Europe. A Benedictine Priory was established at Thetford, together with a nunnery, and a Cluniac monastery at Castle Acre (outside the present District Boundary, although its estates and lands/monastic farms historically influenced the character of the landscape in this area, and formed part of the wider Breckland landscape).
- 5.8. Manor houses and their associated parks often formed the core of the settlements within Breckland, augmented by knapped flint and dressed stone churches, many of which were substantially rebuilt in the 13th and 14th Centuries. These were generally relatively small in scale, with a number of exceptions, e.g. Oxborough. Round towers or short, squat square west towers are a characteristic feature within the Breckland Landscape. The general lack of prosperity apparent in the Breckland Churches is apparent in the ruinous state and isolated situation of many, which are the last surviving relics of numerous deserted medieval villages within the district.
- 5.9. In spite of the widespread woodland clearance in the pre medieval period, Rackham (1986) refers to areas of woodland across the central spine of Norfolk and encompassing Breckland, although this relates to settlements with woodland rather than the physical area of coverage. In addition, Manorial common and grazing lands associated both with pre Enclosure agricultural systems and the heaths were a common feature associated with the settlements. Rabbit farming or 'warrening' was a common practice in the later Medieval period, evident from the occurrence of the word 'Warren' in local place names.

Post Medieval Period (1499-1800)

- 5.10. This period was characterised by the Dissolution of the monastic settlements in the Reformation of 1536-1540, and the associated fragmentation of estates and lands, and the ongoing development of manorial halls and parks, such as Narford.
- 5.11. The most significant change to the landscape occurred towards the end of the period with the Parliamentary Enclosures, which transformed the land cover pattern of Breckland, introducing treed field boundary hedgerows and woodland coverts.

⁵ Pevsner, N and Wilson, B *The Buildings of England: Norfolk 2: North West and South* Penguin, 1999

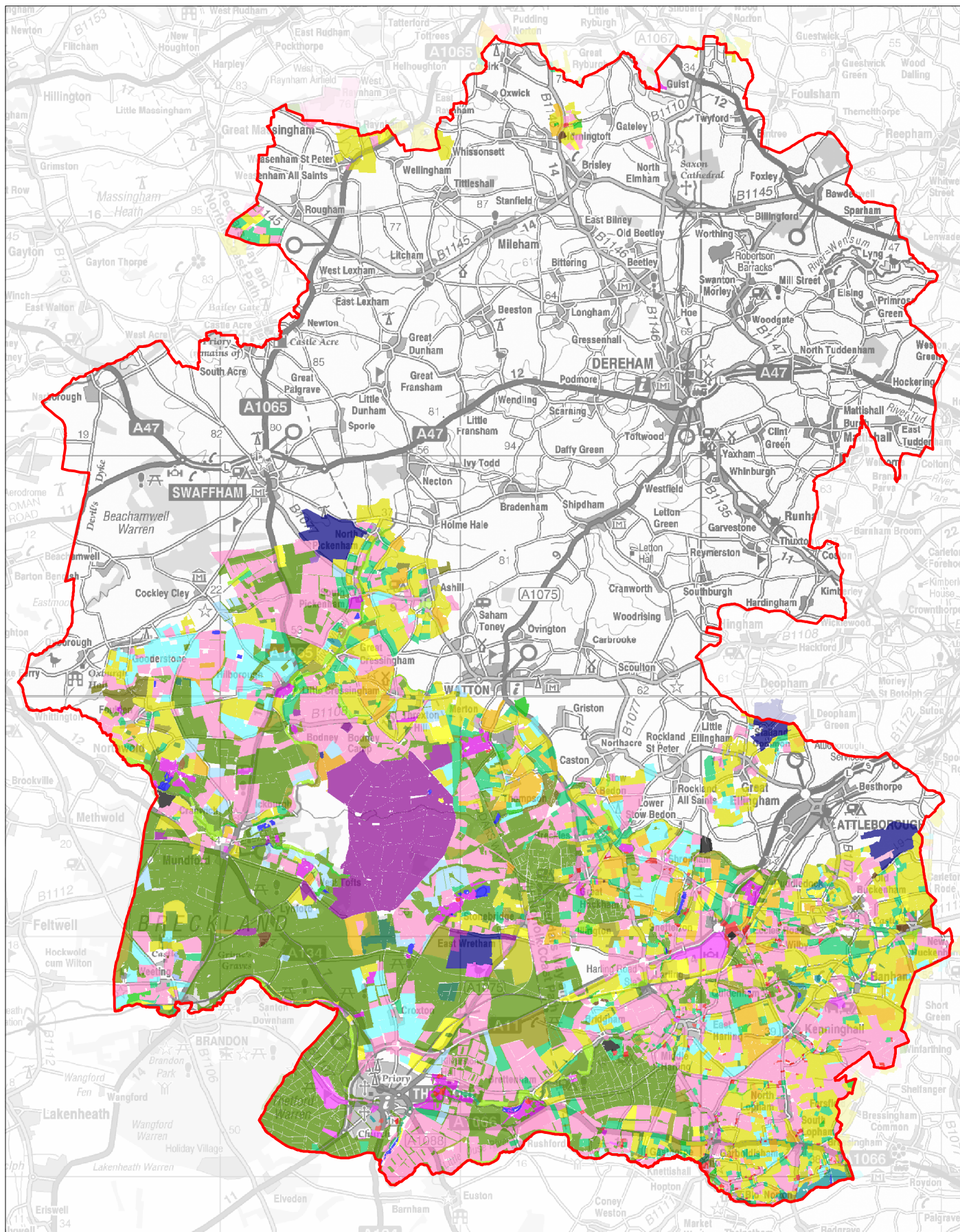
⁶ Cook, O Breckland, Robert Hale Ltd, 1980

William Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk illustrates something of the landscape character and land cover pattern prior to the main period of parliamentary Enclosure, and an extract is shown at **Figure 5.3**.

Early Modern-Modern Period (1800-2000)

- 5.12. The early modern period was initially characterised by ongoing Enclosure of agricultural land and areas of common and heath on a piecemeal basis. Characteristic Scots Pine shelterbelts or wind breaks were planted to form field boundaries from the mid 19th Century. These now form the characteristic heavily contorted 'Deal Rows' within the Breckland landscape⁷.
- 5.13. Agricultural intensification was partly associated with the ongoing improvement and enlargement of the landed estates in the Victorian era, with some notable designed landscapes and estate features created at Sennowe, Dillington, and Garboldisham.
- 5.14. The most significant changes with a landscape expression occurred in the early to mid 20th Century. From 1922, large tracts of Breckland heathland and a number of redundant estates were purchased by the newly formed Forestry Commission for the purposes of establishing predominantly coniferous plantations as part of the national afforestation programme.
- 5.15. The Ministry of Defence became an influential landowner from 1943-44, with the requisition of a number of parkland estates in the centre of the District for the subsequent creation of the Stanta Training Ground, in addition to the construction of a number of airfields on the elevated plateaux. Whilst the requisition of the estates resulted in the loss of a number of the halls, it resulted in the preservation by default of a number of areas of parkland landscape and extensive areas of Breckland heathland.
- 5.16. Other land uses which influenced the character of the Breckland landscape in the latter part of this period were the intensive arable agricultural cultivation, which resulted in extensive field boundary hedgerow loss, as well as other land cover elements. The sand and gravel rich drift geology of many of the Breckland Rivers also made them natural sites for mineral extraction throughout the 20th Century e.g. the Wensum.

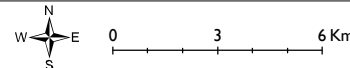
⁷ Fairbrother, N, Op Cit and Cook, O, Op Cit



Breckland LCA
Figure 5.1 Historic Landscape Characterisation

Key

Breckland Boundary	Ancient woodland	Disused mineral extraction	Hall/harge house	Leisure/recreation	Nucleated clusters - more than 5	Pre-18th century fen enclosure	Unimproved freshwater fen
18th-20th century woodland plantation	Animal farm	Disused post-medieval military	Heath	Managed wetland	Nursery with glass house	Rabbit warren	Unimproved rough pasture
20th century enclosure	Boundary loss	Duck decoy pond	Historic earthwork	Mineral extraction	Orchard	Regenerated alder carr woodland	Water meadow
Airfield - military	Boundary loss - with relic element	Enclosed meadow	Hospital, school, university	Mixed origin	Parliamentary fen enclosure	Religious institution	Water reservoir
Airport - civilian	Built up areas - urban development	Estate fields	Industrial	Moor	Piecemeal enclosure by agreement	Small farm clusters - less than 5	Woodland clearance
Allotment	Carr woodland	Gardenesque style parkland	Informal parkland	New enclosure	Piecemeal style Parliamentary enclosure	Streets and rows - linear settlements	
	Common with an open margin	Irregular enclosure		New fen enclosure	Post-medieval military	Stud farm	
	Green						



Source: Norfolk County Council / Norfolk Archaeology
 Note: HLC complete as at November 2006

Date: 06/06/2007



