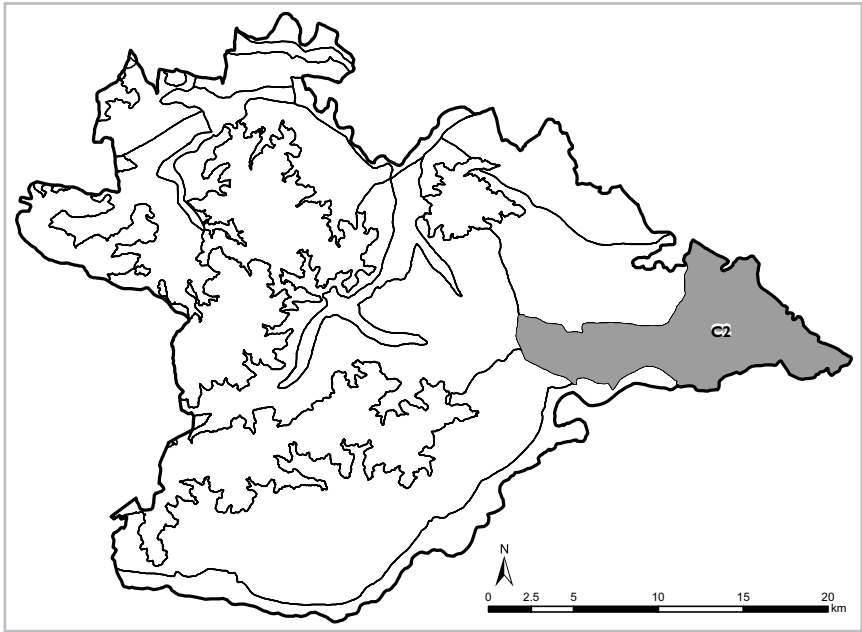
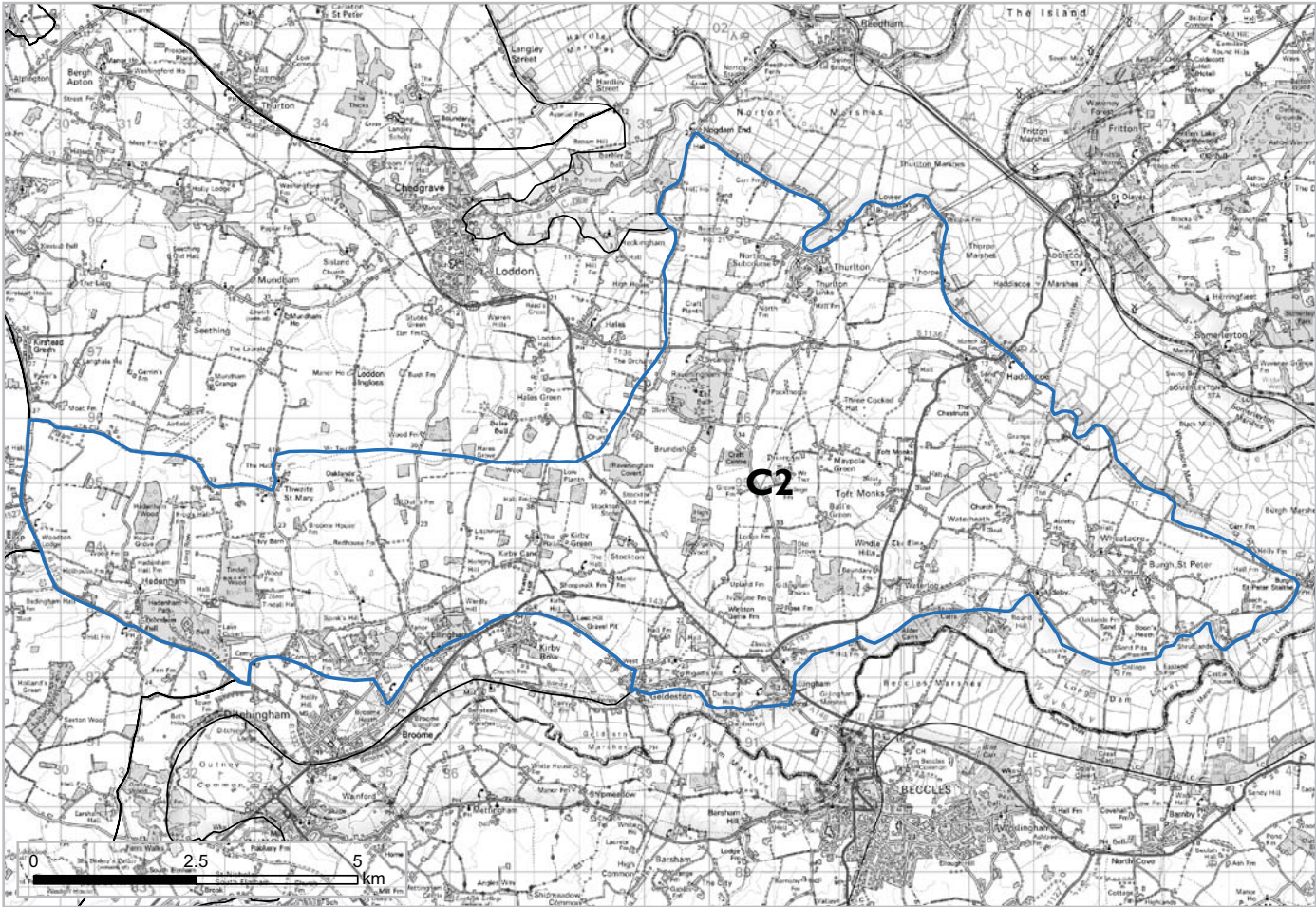


Character Area: C2  
Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland



Location within South Norfolk District



Extent of the Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland Character Area



View across arable farmland to the skyline of the Broads



Parkland at Ravingham Hall



Isolated church north of Broome



Crow stepped gable end



Willow occurs in hedgerows near Wheatacre



View across arable fields towards Tofts Monk





## 14. C2: THURLTON TRIBUTARY FARMLAND WITH PARKLAND

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### DESCRIPTION

- 14.1. **Location and Boundaries:** Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland lies to the extreme east of South Norfolk District adjoining The Broads to the east and extending to the district boundary with Waveney (Suffolk) to the south. The character area comprises the slopes that rise gently up from the low lying wetland landscapes on its boundaries. The visible presence of parkland landscapes distinguishes this character area from the tributary farmland landscapes to the north and west (B1, B4 and B5).
- 14.2. The character of the **Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland** is illustrated in **Figure C2**.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Land rises gently** from the low lying Waveney valley with **areas of flatter plateau cut by narrow tributaries (Becks)** which create local undulations in the landform.
- **A landscape of both openness and enclosure** with open views to The Broads and enclosure provided by the varied topography and tree cover.
- **Presence of distinctive tributaries locally known as Becks** (The Beck and Landspring Beck) which flow eastwards to the adjacent Broads.
- **Predominantly arable farmland** with woodland, including ancient woodland occurring frequently.
- **Medium to large-scale fields** with sparse boundary hedges and hedgerow trees.
- **Presence of large estates with their associated Halls and distinctive parkland landscapes.**
- **Relatively sparsely settled** with the larger villages associated with the Becks.
- **Isolated and round tower churches** (e.g. north of Broome and at Haddiscoe).
- **Modern development plus traditional vernacular** of red brick and Dutch gable ends.
- **A sense of remoteness and peacefulness** away from the main roads (A143 and A146) which cross the area.

## **Geology and Soils**

- 14.3. Glacial till (known as Lowestoft clay) underlies the higher land occurring centrally within the area. Sand and gravel and some pockets of peat correspond to tributaries draining towards the Waveney on the north eastern and eastern side of the character area. Alluvium dominates along the southern edge of the district, corresponding to the tributaries and lower land associated with the Waveney.

## **Landform, Topography, Scale and Enclosure**

- 14.4. The land rises gently from the low lying Waveney valley and is predominantly between 20 and 40m AOD. Flatter plateau areas are cut by narrow tributaries (Becks), which create local undulations in the landscape. This variation in landform affords feelings of both openness and enclosure. Topography and tree cover provide containment, while to the north and east of the area there are some long views over The Broads.

## **Land Cover and Biodiversity**

- 14.5. This is essentially a rural, agricultural landscape. Farmland is predominantly arable within medium sized fields, although these often appear larger where boundaries have been lost, particularly on the more open 'plateau' areas. In contrast, small areas of pasture are associated with the tributary valleys and create a locally distinct landscape. Deciduous woodland occurs in small and medium sized blocks throughout the character area, and is frequently associated with the parkland landscapes. Occasional pine shelterbelts are a further distinctive feature of this area.
- 14.6. The Beck, Landspring Beck and Broome Beck (Waveney Tributaries) inform much of the character of this landscape. However water is not always visible due to the small size of the watercourses. Wetland vegetation, changes in landform and crossings points are indicative of the tributaries and create a clear contrast with the adjacent areas.
- 14.7. Parkland is a defining feature in this character area, with the visual presence of woodlands, plantations, parkland trees and distinctive estate railings and lodges distinguishing it from the adjacent Tributary Farmland.
- 14.8. Woodland blocks are scattered across the area. Tindall Wood and Hedenham Wood are significant, both in terms of size and wildlife value, and form blocks of ancient woodland, designated as SSSIs. Scattered smaller areas of ancient woodland occur to the south and east of Toft Monks and to south and south west of Raveningham. Woodland also occurs in association with the parkland, which is characteristic of this area. The majority of County Wildlife Sites identified in this area are also Ancient Woodland. Leet Hill at Kirby Cane is a SSSI of geological significance showing a sequence of exposed deposits. Orchards are a local feature at Aldeby.
- 14.9. Sand and gravel pits occur on lower ground adjacent to the Waveney and its tributaries, corresponding to the underlying geology. Active pits occur at Kirby Cane and Norton Subcourse.
- 14.10. Moats and field ponds are frequent throughout the character area providing glimpses of open water.

## **Historic Character**

- 14.11. Historic parklands and their associated eighteenth or nineteenth century halls contribute to the historic character of this area. Ditchingham Hall (Grade II) and Raveningham Hall (Grade II\*) appear on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens. Raveningham Hall was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and has a landscape park and woodland with plantations or belts of trees occurring along most boundaries of the estate. The parkland at Ditchingham Hall has a lake, fed by Broome Beck. Other estates in this character area occur at Hedenham Hall, which backs onto Ditchingham Hall; Ellingham Hall, which has an ancient moated farmhouse; Geldeston Hall set in wooded parkland and at Gillingham Hall which is surrounded by plantations.
- 14.12. Conservation Areas occur at Gillingham and Geldeston and around Hedenham Hall.

## **Settlement and Built Character**

- 14.13. The area is relatively sparsely settled, with settlement primarily concentrated in larger villages of Haddiscoe and Thurlton (associated with The Beck and Landspring Beck respectively) and Gillingham. Villages are mainly residential with an absence of a centre/core, Tofts Monk is however set around a village green. Red brick is dominant and Dutch gable ends are a feature.
- 14.14. Isolated churches (e.g. north of Broome) and round tower (e.g. at Haddiscoe) churches are features in this character area and prominent in views. Red brick barns occur as a landmark feature throughout the character and a Windmill with a brick tower c.1800 is located at Thurlton.
- 14.15. Around Aldeby a network of footpaths are marked by Carboniferous Limestones. This is part of the Aldeby Millennium project called 'Pathways in Stone'; it celebrates Aldeby through the Millennia and echoes the tradition of parish boundary markers.
- 14.16. The A143 runs through the area, connecting Kirby Row with Ellingham, this is crossed by the A146 in the centre of the character area. Otherwise a network of rural roads dissects the area. Away from the main roads this area has a very rural and peaceful character. Further modern influences include the pylons which cut north to south across the area, creating a very visible vertical feature.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Significant Landscape Assets**

#### ***National/International***

- Ancient woodland (e.g. Tindall Wood and Hedenham Wood).
- SSSIs (Leet Hill and Stanley Carr).
- Isolated and round tower churches (north of Broome and at Haddiscoe respectively).
- Role as Setting for The Broads.

### ***District/County***

- Strong local vernacular character with red brick and stepped gables.
- Views to The Broads.
- Presence of historic parkland - Ditchingham Hall (Grade II listed) and Raveningham Hall (Grade II\* listed).
- Landspring Beck and Broome Beck.
- County Wildlife Sites, predominantly woodland.
- Presence of moats.

### ***Local***

- Pastoral farmland within the Beck Valleys.
- Mature hedgerow trees.

### **Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities**

14.17. The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland Character Area include:

- the tranquil, rural character that persists across much of the area;
- open views across the marshes of The Broads and vulnerability to any change within views and the effect on the setting of The Broads;
- the land cover mix and contrast created by the arable character of the higher land and pastoral character of the tributary valley corridors;
- the intact field boundaries and the threat of further degradation and loss of hedgerow boundaries particularly on the plateau creating a more open landscape;
- the historic landscape/ landmark features such as isolated and round churches which are particularly sensitive to change and the need to protect the views to and setting of these features;
- the wooded character of the landscape (ancient woodland and woodland associated with parkland) and the need for appropriate forestry/ woodland management to prevent further decline in condition;
- the character of the historic parkland landscapes with their characteristic planting, boundaries and entrances;
- the rural character of the network of roads and lanes that cross the area;
- the character of the settlement and threat of further extension development and need to provide better containment and integration of settlement edges.

## **Landscape Strategy**

**14.18. The overall strategy is to conserve the peaceful, rural farmland character of the Thurlton Tributary Farmland with its distinctive historic parklands and tributary corridors and role as the setting to The Broads. This will include the following:**

- maintain the pastoral/ arable contrast and in particular seek to conserve and extend the pasture along the Beck corridors;
- conserve and enhance the historic parkland landscapes;
- consider opportunities to re-instate field boundaries, particularly where hedgerows have been lost and along roads;
- manage woodlands to conserve character and enhance biodiversity and consider opportunities to extend and link woodlands, including creation of new woodlands around settlements to help integrate stark development edges within the landscape setting;
- consider opportunities for restoring sites previously used for sand and gravel extraction to increase diversity of habitats. Heathland re-creation on sand and gravel sites along the edge of the Waveney Valley maybe an option;
- conserve the ponds and moats which are a distinctive feature of the area;
- conserve local landscape features such as orchards.

## **Development Considerations**

**14.19. Any development in the area must respect the character of Thurlton Tributary Farmland and in particular consider the following:**

- conserve the relatively sparsely settled character with occasional larger villages and scattered isolated settlement and farms;
- conserve the sensitive open valley crest that forms the backdrop in views from The Broads to the east. Maintain key views into and from The Broads;
- continue to conserve and reinforce locally distinctive elements such as the recent parish boundary marker project;
- seek to improve integration of development within the rural setting and reduce the visual impact of harsh settlement edges. Woodland planting is a key opportunity;
- conserve the rural character of the road and lane network which cross the area;
- maintain the views to churches and protect and enhance the setting of these landmark features;
- conserve and enhance the rural setting of the main roads (A143 and A146) that cross the area and avoid linear developments along the road corridors, which would change the perception of the rural area when travelling along these routes;

- contain development on settlement edges and avoid linear extensions to settlement.