

South Norfolk Council

**South Norfolk
Local Landscape Designations Review**

Landscape Character Areas & River Valleys
in the Norwich Policy Area



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Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Watkins', enclosed within a circular flourish.

Dominic Watkins

Position

Director

Date

24th September 2012

Revision

FINAL

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 South Norfolk Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake a desk based review of potential local landscape designations (LDDs) proposed for the Site Specific Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). Based on the recommendations of this study¹, the Council re-commissioned CBA to undertake further more detailed work to validate, and where necessary update, the boundaries of the LDDs.

1.1.2 This report examines the Landscape Character Areas and River Valleys in the Norwich Policy Area as defined by the 2001 South Norfolk Landscape Assessment². The Strategic Gaps/Important Breaks and the Norwich Southern Bypass Landscape Protection Zone LDDs are considered as separate reports.

1.2 Study Objectives

1.2.1 In line with the Brief, the objectives of this study are:

- To undertake additional work to update the Landscape Character Areas and River Valley extents in the Norwich Policy Area to take account of potential changes in landscape character where there has been significant new development, particularly in the Norwich fringe, and to incorporate findings of the Greater Norwich Historic Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment (including the Norfolk Historic Landscape Characterisation data) in line with current best practice and NPPF requirements.
- To take account of changes that have taken place (e.g. planning applications/appeal decisions) or will take place (e.g. preferred Local Plan sites)
- To highlight any changes required to the Landscape Character Area map which will be included within the Development Management Policies Document.

¹ South Norfolk Local Landscape Designations Review (June 2012, Chris Blandford Associates for South Norfolk Council)

² South Norfolk Landscape Assessment - Volume 2: Landscape Character Areas of the Norwich Policy Area (2001, Land Use Consultants for South Norfolk Council)

2.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

2.1.1 The Government's current planning policies on different aspects of land use planning in England are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework³ (NPPF). The NPPF came into effect on 27th March 2012, replacing previously published planning policy statements and guidance in England.

2.1.2 In contrast to the more prescriptive approach to LLDs set out in previous Government policy (PPS7), the NPPF does not rule out that locally valued landscapes may be identified and protected through designation by local planning authorities. The key requirements of the NPPF for local planning authorities to consider in relation to landscape protection policies are:

- The Government recognises that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be protected for its own sake.
- The Government recognises that valued landscapes should be protected and enhanced commensurate with their status.
- Local planning authorities should set criteria-based landscape protection policies.
- Local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach to the protection of green infrastructure networks.
- Local planning authorities should give great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Local planning authorities should base landscape policies on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence.
- Landscape character assessments should be integrated with assessment of historic landscape character, and landscape sensitivity assessments should be prepared for major expansion areas.

³ National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, March 2012)

2.2 Joint Core Strategy

2.2.1 In March 2011, a Joint Core Strategy⁴ was adopted for the Councils of South Norfolk, Norwich City and Broadland. The key requirements of the adopted Joint Core Strategy in relation to landscape protection policies within South Norfolk's Development Plan Documents are:

- DPDs should seek to retain the locally distinctive character of rural areas in accordance with the JCS's spatial vision.
- DPDs should seek to protect 'key landscapes of acknowledged regional or local importance' in order to comply with a core planning objective of the JCS.
- The JCS requires that DPDs should safeguard and enhance environmental 'assets of local importance' (including landscape and historic landscape character, countryside and rural character and the setting of Norwich, towns and villages and the Broads).
- DPDs should recognise that assets of local importance are valuable in their own right, and in combination provide a significant resource for the JCS area.
- DPDs should maintain strategic gaps between Wymondham, Hethersett and Cringleford in relation to planning of major new/expanded communities.
- DPDs should protect the landscape setting of the Norwich urban area.
- DPDs should protect the landscape setting of the Broads.

2.3 Summary

2.3.1 Taking into account the NPPF's requirements and the absence of specific guidance or accepted practice, it is generally acknowledged that local planning authorities seeking to include LLD policies in their local plans should:

- Make a specific case for the LLDs based on factors unique to its area (relating to the particular characteristics of the landscape and its development pressures).
- Show that the boundaries of areas to be designated as LLD can be defended using a clear methodology based on a robust Landscape Character Assessment undertaken in accordance with best practice.

⁴ Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (Adopted March 2011)

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The methodology for validating and, where necessary, updating the boundaries and descriptions for the existing Landscape Character Areas and River Valleys in the Norwich Policy Area involved desk-based studies and field work as described below⁵.

3.2 Desk-Based Studies

- 3.2.1 Volume 2 of the 2001 South Norfolk Landscape Assessment⁶ sought to ‘*determine and describe the distinctive features or characteristics (landscape assets) that were important to district landscape character, in order to advise South Norfolk District Council on which aspects of the Norwich Policy Area landscape are most sensitive or important and how the identified landscape assets can be protected.*’ The boundaries of the Landscape Character Types and Areas in the Norwich Policy Area from the 2001 study were mapped (see **Figure 3.1**).
- 3.2.2 The Historic Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment undertaken in 2009 for the Greater Norwich Preferred Option Growth Areas⁷ identified the sensitivity of ‘Historic Character Zones’ around Long Stratton, Wymondham and Hethersett-Easton in the Norwich Policy Area within South Norfolk (see **Appendix A** and **Figures 3.2a, 3.2b** and **3.2c**). The Zones were derived from a desk-based characterisation study of historic landscape character, archaeology and historic built environment patterns, which provided the basis for an assessment of their historic sensitivity to inform spatial planning and development control decision-making. The reports for each Historic Character Zone included as **Appendix A** summarise what is known about the earlier landscapes of the area, and what survives as visible and recognisable features in the current landscape. A qualitative summary of the historic environment assets and overall sensitivity is also provided for each Zone.
- 3.2.3 A review of OS maps, aerial photographs and consented planning applications was undertaken to identify and map major changes in the landscape since 2001. In addition, major unimplemented planning applications consented since 2001 and Local Plan ‘Preferred Options’ Development Site Allocations were also mapped to identify future change in the landscape. See **Section 4.0** and **Figure 4.1** for details).

⁵ In line with Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency)

⁶ <http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/3143.asp>

⁷ Historic Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment for the Greater Norwich Preferred Option Growth Areas (May 2009, Norfolk County Council)

3.3 Field Survey

- 3.3.1 Field survey work was undertaken in September 2012 to validate the existing Landscape Character Types and Areas, by taking into account changes in landscape character where there has been significant new development or other forms of landscape change since 2001.
- 3.3.2 In line with the 2001 South Norfolk Landscape Assessment, only Landscape Character Areas which fall wholly or predominantly within the Norwich Policy Area have been reviewed as part of this study. Small parts of Landscape Character Areas which fall within the Norwich Policy Area have been considered to form part of the wider Rural Policy Area and excluded from the study.

3.4 Review of Landscape Character Area Boundaries and Descriptions

- 3.4.1 The findings from the desk-based studies and field work has been used to inform the validation and update of the existing Landscape Character Areas within the Norwich Policy Area as defined by Volume 2 of the 2001 South Norfolk Landscape Assessment, including in particular the *Key Characteristics, Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities* and *Development Considerations* as set out within **Section 5.0**.

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHANGES WITHIN THE NORWICH POLICY AREA

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The landscapes within the Norwich Policy Area have been subject to considerable, yet localised, changes since 2001. For the purposes of this Study, a range of aerial photos were examined, dating from 2001 to 2012 in order to identify the key significant landscape changes within each Landscape Character Area in the Norwich Policy Area.

4.1.2 In addition, development sites within the Norwich Policy Area for which planning permission has been consented by South Norfolk Council⁸ have also been taken into consideration as part of the assessment of landscape change between 2001 and 2012. Field surveys were also undertaken to confirm which of the development sites have been built or remain undeveloped at this stage.

4.1.3 As shown on **Figure 4.1** and outlined in **Table 4.1**, landscape changes between 2001 and 2012 have been considered under the following categories:

- New residential development.
- New sand/gravel extraction development.
- New commercial/industrial development.
- New leisure/recreation development.

4.1.4 In addition, future landscape changes have also been mapped on **Figure 4.1** and outlined in **Table 4.1** under the following categories:

- Consented residential development - not yet built.
- Local Plan 'Preferred Options' Strategic Allocation Sites.

4.2 Landscape Changes by Landscape Character Areas

4.2.1 Landscape changes within each Landscape Character Area in the Norwich Policy Area are set out within **Table 4.1**:

⁸ Based on mapping and information supplied by South Norfolk Council (Lisa O'Donovan)

Table 4.1 - Landscape Changes by Landscape Character Areas in the Norwich Policy Area

Landscape Character Area(s)	Type of Landscape Change (where known)	Location/Additional Details
A3 Tud Rural River Valley A4 Wensum River Valley	Residential development and community facilities	River Tud/Queens Hills Site & Queens Hills Country Park - Costessey
A4 Wensum River Valley	Residential development	Land off West End - Costessey
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Residential development	Costessey – Ottaway Close, Bridge Farm, Norwich Road site
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Residential development	Costessey – East Hills Road Site
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Residential development	Former Police station, Lodge Farm Site and Roundwell PH Site
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Commercial development – new warehouses north of A1074	William Forest Way & John Hyme Way
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Residential development	Former Police station, Lodge Farm Site and Roundwell PH Site
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Park and Ride	SW of A1074/A47 roundabout
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Sand and Gravel Extraction	North of A47
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Residential development	Garnett Drive, Easton
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Sand and Gravel Extraction	SE of Easton, adjacent to existing Sand and Gravel pits
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Residential development	Land off Dereham Road
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Commercial development – Premier Inn Hotel	North of Norfolk Showground and south of A47
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Residential development	North of Dereham Road – including land to the rear of the Dog PH and the former Easton Service Station
G1 Easton Fringe Farmland	Residential development	Vicarage Meadow, Dereham Pond
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Land off Greenland Avenue, Wymondham – part built
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Not yet built	Land to the north of Norwich Common, Wymondham
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential, commercial and parkland development	Hart's Farm Site to the south of B1135 and west of A11
B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Police station site, Wymondham
B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Fairland Street, Wymondham
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Adjacent to Park Lane, Wymondham
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Not yet built	Barker's Mill, Rightup Lane, Wymondham

Landscape Character Area(s)	Type of Landscape Change (where known)	Location/Additional Details
B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Myhill Grain site, Rightup Lane, Wymondham
B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Silfield Road, Rightup Lane, Wymondham
B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland	Not yet built	Saleground, Station Road, Wymondham
B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Land at London Road, Wymondham
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Land at Myrtle Road, Hethersett
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Ash Close, Back Lane, Wymondham
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Hethersett, Admiral's Way
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Harveys Auto site, Hethersett
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Land at Great Melton site, Hethersett
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Mill Road Site, Hethersett
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Lyngate Farm, Hethersett
C1 Yare Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Land north of Newmarket Road, Cringleford
C1 Yare Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Agr Windows Factory site, Newmarket Road, Cringleford
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Cuckoofield Lane, Mulbarton
B1 Tas Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Lime Tree Avenue, Long Stratton
B1 Tas Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Flowerpot Lane, Long Stratton
B1 Tas Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Land at Chequers Road, Long Stratton
B1 Tas Tributary Farmland	Council Offices	Land adjacent to Saffron Barn, Long Stratton
D2 Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Tulip Tree Drive, Poringland
D2 Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Land west of B1332 Site – Phase 2, Poringland
D2 Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland	Residential development	Land west of the Street and at the Street, Poringland
B1 Tas Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Whitlingham Hospital site, Trowse
B1 Tas Tributary Farmland	Residential development	Land south of the Street, Burn Meadow site, Trowse
D2 Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland	Not yet built	Alston's Meadow Site, Framlingham Earl
F1 Yare Valley Urban Fringe	Country Park	Whitlingham Country Park

5.0 REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS WITHIN THE NORWICH POLICY AREA

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 As noted in Section 3.0, the Landscape Character Areas within the Norwich Policy Area as defined and described by the 2001 Landscape Assessment were reviewed and validated through a process of desk-study and field survey work.
- 5.1.2 Where considered necessary, recommended updates to the '*Key Characteristics, Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities*' and '*Development Considerations*' sections of the Landscape Character Area descriptions in the 2001 Landscape Assessment report have been made. The review has highlighted that not all Landscape Character Areas within the Study Area required updating. In these cases, the existing 2001 Landscape Character Area descriptions are considered to be robust and fit for purpose. This section should therefore be read in conjunction with the 2001 report⁹.
- 5.1.3 Additional or new information for each Landscape Character Area description is set out below highlighted in ***bold italics***.

5.2 A1. Tas Rural River Valley

- 5.2.1 The existing Landscape Character Area description set out in the 2001 report is considered to be robust and fit for purpose. No changes are required.

5.3 A2. Yare-Tiffey Rural River Valley

- 5.3.1 The existing Landscape Character Area description set out in the 2001 report is considered to be robust and fit for purpose. No changes are required.

5.4 A3. Tud Rural River Valley

Key Characteristics

- Small intimate rural valley within confined valley form and restricted views, although more distant views are possible from the upper slopes;

⁹ <http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/3143.asp>

- Small-scale river channel only evident at the points where it is crossed by the Costessey-New Costessey Road and the Ringland Road;
- Sand and gravel drift geology resulting in poor-quality soils with areas of wooded common land with 'heathy' understorey;
- Presence of mineral working sites to exploit geological resources;
- Intricate sinuous topography accentuated by the wooded valley sides and relatively narrow open valley floor;
- Small-scale, very sparse settlement compromising occasional isolated farmsteads. The pastoral valley floor creates an important 'green' gap between the settlements of Costessey and New Costessey which extend onto the upper valley sides;
- Remote, very rural character despite the proximity to the City, as a result of extremely restricted access through the valley – with no roads or footpaths;
- Strongly wooded character with the presence of a mix of coniferous and deciduous large woodland blocks on the valley sides, plus long lines of poplar trees found in association with the river. Single trees and plantations of Scots pine are a distinctive feature;
- A wooded gateway to Norwich is created by the woodland present on the upper valley slopes. This is an important component of the landscape adjoining the Norwich Southern Bypass;
- Distinctive agricultural landscape common on the valley sides, created by earth fields and regularly spaced corrugated pig shelters, with other areas used for arable farmland;
- Important views into the Tud valley from the Norwich Southern Bypass and views out of the area from the upper valley crest;

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

5.4.1 The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the character area will include:

- The need to conserve the remote rural character in the face of gradual incremental development (***including ongoing development at the Queens Hills Site***) which is impinging both visually and audibly on the valley;
- Threat of 'suburbanisation' and coalescence with settlement extending down the valley sides, ***particularly from the adjacent large-scale Queens Hills development within the Wensum Rural River Valley***;
- The need to control potential further mineral extraction and ensure appropriate restoration of existing and future extraction sites;
- Management of the woodland resource and maintenance of the sense of 'wooded rural gateway/threshold' from the Norwich Southern Bypass to the City;

- Further decline in landscape quality associated with changes in farming practice with some areas being managed intensively (pig raising), other areas used as hobby farms and some areas being neglected, leading to loss of hedgerows.

Development Considerations

5.4.2 Any development must respect the character of the Tud Rural River Valley, and conserve and enhance the key landscape assets as described in the landscape character assessment. In particular, it must seek to maintain the remote, rural qualities of the valley. This will include reference to the following considerations:

- Respect the sparsely settled character of the valley, with occasional farm buildings and general absence of access by road or lane network east-west through the valley;
- Maintain the distinct and separate character of the settlements of Costessey, New Costessey **and Queens Hills**, with their location on the upper valley crest/ridge and prevent incremental development down the valley sides into this character area;
- Maintain the open pastoral valley floor which provides an important natural green corridor and strategic gap to prevent coalescence of Costessey, New Costessey **and Queens Hills**;
- Consider the impact of developments within the adjacent landscape character areas, particularly Easton Fringe Farmland (G1) and **Wensum Rural River Valley (A4)** on the character of the Tud Valley. This will include visual impacts, light spill and audible impacts – all of which have the potential to erode the remote character of the valley;
- Consider the impact of any development upon the wooded quality of the landscape.

5.5 A4. Wensum Rural River Valley

Key Characteristics

- Wide valley form occurring outside of the District boundary;
- Presence of extensive flooded gravel pits arising from former extraction of sand and gravels;
- Small areas of paddock and grazing, generally associated with the outskirts of settled areas;
- Large areas of deciduous woodland blocks on the valley sides and distinctive poplar avenues on the valley floor contributing to a wooded naturalistic valley character;
- Important wetland habitats especially the River Wensum that has been designated as a SSSI;
- Settled valley (particularly outside of the District) including the Strong linear settlement of Costessey that follows a meander of the Wensum, **and the new mixed development at Queens Hills**;
- **Historic, sunken lanes meander through the valley;**

- Brick-based architecture including elements of Cosseyware – fine decorative brick work produced in Costessey at the turn of the century. Generally lacking the rural vernacular appeal of valleys more distant from Norwich;
- Presence of Mariott's Way recreational path.

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

5.5.1 The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities include:

- Threat of urbanising trends causing Costessey to lose its 'village' character and unattractive linear sprawl at the edge of the settlement;
- Further suburbanisation of roads and village edges;
- ***Increased provision of new road infrastructure associated with the Queens Hills development and associated noise and visual intrusion into the valley;***
- Loss of wooded character of the Wensum Valley and the distinctive variety of woodlands which create diversity within the landscape;
- Deterioration of the River Wensum and its valuable ecology as a result of development or management practices that would affect its settings or the quality of its water, including run off from urban areas;
- Loss of views to the River.

Development Considerations

5.5.2 Any development permitted within the area should respect the character of the Wensum Rural River Valley and should conserve the existing landscape assets. In particular it should include reference to the following:

- Prevent linear expansion of Costessey along the River Wensum;
- Respect the character of Costessey and prevent loss of identity through merging with other proximate settlements (e.g. New Costessey);
- Resist infill or extension development which does not respond positively to the landscape context and existing character;
- Respond positively to the remaining vernacular context and the unique character of the decorative brickwork present in some buildings;
- ***Maintain a strategic gap between Costessey, and Queens Hills to prevent settlement coalescence;***
- ***Maintain the predominantly rural character of the area and the network of historic sunken lanes;***
- Consider the impact of any development upon views to the River Wensum.

5.6 B1. Tas Tributary Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Open, gently undulating to flat and sloping landscape incised by shallow tributary valleys, the tributary streams of which are not prominent landscape features;
- ***Roman Pye Road (A140) is a significant historic feature, visible within the landscape and the reason for Long Stratton's location;***
- ***Significant number of surviving greens, cohesive settlements of timber-framed buildings grouped around them, church/hall complexes and an extensive network of ancient trackways linking them together;***
- Large open arable fields of cereal, sugarbeet and occasionally sweetcorn;
- Framed open views across the countryside and into adjacent character areas;
- Small blocks of deciduous woodland of high ecological and visual quality. These create wooded horizons which add variety to and create intimacy within the landscape;
- Damp grasslands of ecological importance located within the tributary valleys;
- Scattered remnant hedgerow trees, particularly oak sometimes including intact avenues lining the roads or marking former, denuded, field boundaries;
- Transportation corridors including main connecting roads ***and an extensive network of narrow lanes and byroads (many of which are ancient, within the east of the area);***
- Network of recreational footpaths;
- Ditches, low banks and wide grass verges associated with the network of rural roads;
- Settlement characterised by a small number of large ***historic*** villages including the administrative centre of South Norfolk - Long Stratton - with smaller hamlets, scattered farmhouses and agricultural buildings;
- ***Pockets of new residential infill development in Trowse and Long Stratton;***
- Mixed vernacular of timber-frame, stepped and Dutch Gables, thatch and round-towered churches.

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

5.6.1 The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the landscape to change are considered to be:

- Further loss of vegetation structure including woodland and hedgerows from the landscape which would lead to a greater sense of openness and could tip the balance in favour of bleakness ***(for example the farms along Chequers Lane which once lined Tharston Common are now on the edge of Long Stratton's western expansion and have largely lost their rural setting);***
- ***Loss of the network of greens which has eroded the historic integrity of the area;***

- ***Infill development which results in erosion of historic character and integrity;***
- ***Loss of historic buildings and the historic integrity and fabric of settlements such as Long Stratton;***
- Gently sloping topography and open landscape making this area sensitive to intrusion by tall and large elements, including farm buildings and pylons;
- Potential for adverse effects upon views in the north of this character area to/from Norwich and the Bypass.

Development Considerations

5.6.2 Any development permitted should respect the character and features of the Tas Tributary Farmland and its landscape assets including:

- Respect the existing small-scale and dispersed historic settlement pattern and avoid developments that would affect the vernacular qualities of existing settlements (e.g. urbanising influences upon the rural lanes) or would lead to impacts upon the character of settlement distribution;
- Maintain positive views of the Tas tributary Farmland from the Norwich Southern Bypass and to/from the City of Norwich;
- Consider the impact of any development upon the skyline and sense of openness of the character area;
- ***Consider the impact of new infill development on the existing/historic street pattern and existing vernacular character and pattern;***
- Maintain positive views to/from Venta Icenorum in the Tas Valley;
- Consider the impacts of any development upon the nature of the current and desired physical relationship of Long Stratton to Norwich and upon Long Stratton's perceptual role as the geographical and administrative heart of South Norfolk.

5.7 B2. Tiffey Tributary Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Flat, shelving to gently undulating landscape incised by small hidden tributary streams and their small-scale shallow valleys;
- Pleasant rural working landscape of farmland with sparse settlement;
- Limited woodland cover creating wooded horizons, but including a number of ecologically important woodlands, some of which are ancient;
- Large scale arable farmlands in large fields with sparse hedgerows and hedgerow trees with some pastoral farmland in the valleys;

- Framed and long-range views into adjoining Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valleys and towards important landmarks including Wymondham Abbey;
- Water bodies of national ecological and historical importance including moated sites and natural lakes, some of which are listed SSSIs or SAMs;
- Sparse settlement comprising villages and isolated dwellings but connected by a dense network of rural lanes;
- Elements of vernacular interest including isolated churches, timber-framed buildings, stepped gables and a windmill;
- Presence of important transportation links including the A11 which makes the area an important gateway into South Norfolk.

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

5.7.1 The key sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the Tiffey Tributary Farmland Character Area are considered to be:

- Further hedgerow loss particularly around settlements and loss of hedgerow trees leading to a sense of bleakness and loss of the pleasant framed quality of the views;
- Introduction of tall elements, in particular large agricultural warehouse buildings that may disturb the visual balance;
- Sensitivity of areas with positive views into surrounding areas, in particular views of landmarks such as Wymondham Abbey;
- ***Infill development, particularly within Wymondham, which results in erosion of historic character and integrity;***
- ***Increased pressure on the network of rural roads as a result of new developments (such as that at Greenland Avenue; north of Norwich Common and on the Police Station Site within Wymondham);***
- ***Potential for new development to be sited on ridges/at the edges of settlements, which would be visually prominent within views from the character area and surrounding Landscape Character Areas;***
- Presence of important buildings, such as isolated churches, SAMs and other features of vernacular or archaeological interest or their settings which require protection from disturbance or visual intrusion;
- Development associated with the A11 road corridor.

Development Considerations

5.7.2 Any development permitted within the area should respect the character and assets of the Tiffey Tributary Farmland and in particular:

- Maintain the perception of the area as being predominantly rural and ensure that new development relates to the existing pattern of small villages with occasional scattered development;
- Respect and conserve the rural quality of the small and intricate network of roads;
- Ensure sensitive siting and design of new agricultural buildings (e.g. below skylines) to minimise visual impact upon the landscape;
- ***Ensure sensitive siting and design of new residential development (e.g. below skylines and avoiding ridgelines at the edges of settlements) to minimise visual impact on the landscape;***
- Consider the setting of the A11 and avoid linear development associated with this important transportation corridor;
- Protect views to landmarks and their settings, in particular Wymondham Abbey, Wicklewood Windmill and the isolated churches and ensure these are not adversely affected by development proposals.

5.8 B3. Rockland tributary farmland

- 5.8.1 The existing Landscape Character Area description set out in the 2001 report is considered to be robust and fit for purpose. No changes are required.

5.9 C1. Yare Tributary with Parkland

Key Characteristics

- Shelving landform with a gently undulating topography created by the presence of small tributary stream valleys cutting through the landscape providing a variety of open/more intimate landscape settings and long/framed views;
- Transitional landscape occupying the mid ground between the upland plateau of the Wymondham-Hethersett settled plateau farmland and the principal Yare Valley and forming part of the transition between the rural and urban landscape;
- Peaceful farm land with small farm woodlands and intermittently wooded tributary valleys creating a quiet rural atmosphere;
- Presence of large parkland estates particularly associated directly with the tributary valleys. Estate railings, boundary fences, tree-lined avenues and traditional wooded park land contribute to landscape character;
- Sparsely settled landscape of small clusters of farmhouses, small villages and rural dwellings interspersed with large manorial buildings and halls;
- A sense of impenetrability and remoteness despite the presence of major transportation corridors. The Norwich Southern Bypass and A 11 Wymondham Road trisect the landscape

and the area is also traversed by the main Norwich London railway line. These routes create corridors of movement and noise in this otherwise peaceful landscape. Elsewhere, there is an intricate network of narrow rural roads and lanes;

- Yare Minor Tributaries Streams elusive - evident but usually hidden within the landscape by topography or trees noticeable only at fording points or at close-range;
- Arable and pastoral farmland of cereals and sugarbeet with more pastoral land uses within the immediate tributary valley corridor. Fields surrounded by sparse hedges and hedgerow trees, with occasional mature/veteran oaks forming a distinctive feature alongside the lanes;
- Vernacular architectural character, predominantly of rural buildings and estate dwellings. More modern dwellings are found in the larger villages;
- High number of large dwellings set in extensive grounds including characteristic large detached halls and manor houses, usually constructed of brick, of high architectural quality, associated with the parkland estates of Keswick, Thickthorn and Colney. These are frequently screened by woodland, and therefore visible only at close range;
- Intermittent long views towards the City of Norwich;
- Presence of large institutional buildings including the new hospital and areas of the Research Park at Colney.

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

5.9.1 The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities of this landscape character area include:

- Proximity to Norwich and loss of rural farmland character through expansion of the urban edge of the City beyond the Yare Valley, development associated with the Southern Bypass/A11 **or to the west of Cringleford**;
- Particular vulnerability to loss of clarity of the rural/urban divide created by the Yare Valley;
- Incremental change including upgrading of the rural lane network (e.g. kerbing and lighting) plus isolated developments (e.g. institutions) resulting in a more urban character;
- A gently shelving topography from the plateau and long views making this area especially sensitive to the location of any new development/ infrastructure – and potential impact on views to the City;
- ***Infill development within Cringleford and new development at the western edge of the village, which has the potential to be visually intrusive in views across the character area;***
- Loss and degradation in the character of the historic parkland and designed landscapes, particularly with changing uses and demands;
- Loss of mature tree boundaries (without replacement) resulting in further 'opening up' of views plus loss of woodland;
- Suburbanisation of field and parkland boundaries.

Development Considerations

5.9.2 Any development must respect the character of the Yare Tributary Farmland and Parkland Character Area, and conserve and enhance the key landscape assets as described in the landscape character assessment. In particular it must seek to maintain the peaceful farmland landscape and a clear rural/urban transition. This will include reference to the following key criteria:

- Respect the sparsely settled character of the area with small villages, isolated buildings of vernacular character and large institutional buildings in extensive grounds;
- Protect the quality, character and setting of the key landscape assets, notably the tributary corridors and the historic parklands which characterise the Yare Tributary Farmland and Parkland;
- Seek to ensure the restoration and management of historic landscapes as a condition of permission for new uses/development within these areas;
- Consider impact of proposals on the intricate rural lane network – avoid widening and kerb lighting which will quickly impart a more urban character;
- Consider impact on key views from the higher plateau landscape, the adjoining character areas (particularly the Yare Valley Urban Fringe) and views towards the City;
- Ensure that the rural character of the landscape of the Norwich Southern Bypass Protection Zone is maintained and that differential development North and South of the road do not erode the unity of the Character Area.

5.10 D1. Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Key Characteristics

- A settled landscape with large edge-of-plateau towns (including market towns and those of more modern origin) and villages plus smaller, nucleated settlements which are dispersed across the plateau;
- Large expanse of flat landform with little variation over long distances with strong open horizons – the archetypal ‘Norfolk’ landscape of popular imagination;
- Large-scale open arable fields including sugarbeet, cereal and oilseed rape monocultures creating simple, often monotonous, character;
- ***Large town of Wymondham, with its strongly historic core and a high number of historic buildings from the 15th-19th centuries, dominates the western edge of this character area;***
- ***Highly cohesive and well-preserved medieval settlement pattern within Wymondham;***
- Long views from plateau edge, including to Norwich from the northern plateau edge;

- Poor hedgerows generally, which accentuates the openness of the landscape. The resulting wide verges beside roads often contain attractive wildflowers. Some mature hedgerow trees are found, particularly beside roads, which are a distinctive feature. Areas of more intact hedgerow network sometimes occur around settlements;
- Sparsely wooded but with occasional woodland blocks, sometimes associated with former parkland areas, creating a more wooded character and wooded horizons in parts of this generally open landscape;
- Vernacular buildings particularly brick built, timber-framed, and stepped gables. Some isolated churches, sometimes hidden by dense screening churchyard vegetation;
- ***A number of landscaped parks and associated halls to the west of Norwich show that this was a favoured area for the city's wealthy and influential to build convenient country residences.***

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

5.10.1 The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities of this landscape character area include:

- ***Erosion of historic buildings and features/loss of historic settlement pattern as a result of infill development, particularly within Wymondham and Hethersett;***
- ***New large-scale developments at the north-eastern edges of Wymondham which extend urban influences into the surrounding landscape and are potentially visible in views from the surrounding plateau landscape;***
- Imposition of insensitive developments and tall structures such as masts/grain silos and other large scale farm or industrial/commercial buildings that break up the skyline and intrude upon the sense of openness;
- Loss of vernacular character, particularly as a result of sprawl from the edge of the existing plateau top settlements;
- Developments that intrude upon the view to important landmarks e.g. Wymondham Abbey or the City of Norwich;
- Further 'opening up' of the landscape through loss of woodland, hedgerows or hedgerow trees;
- The potential for settlement coalescence, particularly associated with the vulnerable A11 corridor or B1172 between Wymondham and Hethersett;

Development Considerations

5.10.2 Any development must respect the character of the Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland. This will include reference to the following criteria:

- Respect the distinctive settlement pattern comprising concentrations of development at plateau edge locations, and smaller nucleated village settlements and dispersed buildings across the plateau;
- Maintain the nucleated clustered character of the settlements and limit edge sprawl out into the adjacent landscape; well-planned infill and edge development may be acceptable;
- Consider (cumulative) impact of all tall structures such as masts, energy developments, farm buildings on skyline views and sense of 'openness' and particularly on views to the plateau skyline from the surrounding lower tributary farmland;
- Maintain key views from the plateau edge to/from the City of Norwich;
- Maintain strategic gaps between settlements, and in particular prevent further growth of Wymondham and/or Hethersett which would lead to coalescence of settlement along the A11 leading to the merger of Wymondham/Hethersett or Hethersett/Norwich;
- ***Ensure that any new infill development respects the historic settlement pattern and vernacular built character, particularly within, or in proximity to, the historic cores of Wymondham and Hethersett;***
- ***Consider the visual impact of new large-scale settlement edge developments in views from adjacent landscapes and Landscape Character Areas.***

5.11 D2. Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Flat landscape, which rises to a gentle central dome, with strong open horizons;
- Densely settled core area, predominantly of ribbons of post-war bungalows and other development which interconnect the older village cores. These older cores have a strong vernacular appeal;
- ***The nucleated settlement of Poringland dominates the centre of this character area;***
- ***A network of rural (often single-track) lanes which transect the plateau farmland;***
- Large scale open arable fields including sugarbeet, cereal and oilseed rape monoculture;
- Long views from the plateau edge including to Norwich from northern plateau edge and to the Tas Valley;
- Poor hedgerows but wide roadside verges and numerous remnant hedgerow standards, particularly around settled areas;
- Wooded character in parts when viewed from afar, particularly around the settlements and due to the presence of woodland blocks in the north of the character area;
- Prominent landmark telecommunication towers (radio and radar) located at the high point of the plateau and visible from a large area of the countryside;
- Vernacular buildings present but somewhat 'diluted' by more recent development;
- Recreational routeways including Boudica's Way leading to the Tas Valley.

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

5.11.1 The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities of this landscape character area include:

- Further ribbon development along the rural lanes particularly where this would blur the distinction between individual settlements;
- Developments that intrude upon plateau edge views either from the plateau or visible from the surrounding countryside, particularly the visually sensitive area between the plateau and the city of Norwich;
- Developments that impact upon or intrude upon the setting or views from recreational routes;
- Location of further tall structures such as communication towers which would break the skyline and would adversely affect the perception of a rural hinterland to the city of Norwich;
- Further opening up of the landscape through loss of woodland, hedgerows or hedgerow trees;
- Improvement of remaining rural lanes including kerbing, lighting or loss of verges.

Development Considerations

5.11.2 Any development must respect the character of the Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland. This will include reference to the following criteria:

- Maintain the distinction and separation between the core settled area around Poringland and the smaller outlying settlements;
- Consider the impact of developments upon views from and to the sensitive edge of the plateau, particularly in the north of the area which is intervisible with Norwich;
- Limit further intrusion of masts, pylons and other tall structures upon the skyline;
- Ensure that any new development is well-integrated into the landscape and maintains the quality of the transition between the settled and agricultural landscape;
- Avoid settlement that accentuates the linear quality of the post-war settlements pattern;
- Avoid developments that adversely affect recreational routes through the area.

5.12 F1. Yare Valley Urban Fringe

5.12.1 The existing Landscape Character Area description set out in the 2001 report is considered to be robust and fit for purpose. No changes are required.

5.13 G1. Easton Fringe Farmland

Key Characteristics

- Undulating landscape sloping towards a distinct ridge top marking the boundary between the valleys of the Yare and Tud;
- Sand and gravel geology which has led in the past to the use of the land for mineral extraction resulting in areas of derelict and degraded landscape;
- Highly developed ridge top with a strong urban fringe character including the presence of urban settlement, large retail superstores with their associated car parks plus a park and ride scheme;
- ***New linear commercial development including a hotel and car park adjacent to and to the north of the A47;***
- ***Large housing estate to the west of Bowthorpe (the former Police Station/Lodge Farm and Roundwell Public House site), which extends the urban influence westwards along the A1074 road corridor;***
- ***Infill and settlement edge development in Easton further add to the sense of a ‘developed’ human influenced character within this area;***
- Recreational uses including the presence of a golf course and the Royal Norfolk Showground;
- Attractive arable and pastoral farmland context, somewhat marginalized by the development, but retaining a strong rural character;
- Absence of significant wooded areas;
- Major transportation through-route and gateway into South Norfolk due to the presence of the Norwich Southern Bypass.

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

5.13.1 The sensitivities and vulnerabilities of this landscape have been assessed and are considered to be:

- ***Further piecemeal infill and settlement edge development within Easton and to the west of Bowthorpe, resulting in settlement coalescence along the A1074/A47 road corridor;***
- Balance of developed area to rural context. Because of the highly development character of much of this area, further intrusion of built features upon the rural landscape may have significant effects upon the perceived quality;
- The need to consider the views from the surrounding landscape, which is highly sensitive to any development on or near the prominent ridge top within this area;

- The need to preserve good quality rural views from the ridge top to the surrounding countryside;
- 'Gateway' location that emphasises the importance of this area in promoting a positive view of the South Norfolk landscape and entry to the City of Norwich;
- The need to preserve distinction and a clear identity between Norwich City and Easton and the other ridge top development.

Development Considerations

5.13.2 Any development should respect the character and landscape assets of the Easton Fringe Farmland Character Area and this will necessitate consideration of the following criteria:

- Consider the cumulative impacts of any development upon the overall character of this area;
- Consider the impact of any proposals upon the quality of the 'sense of arrival' into South Norfolk District and the City of Norwich and encourage developments that would enhance the quality of this experience;
- Avoid tendencies towards incremental linear development associated with the A47 corridor.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Boundaries

6.1.1 This review undertaken by CBA has concluded that the boundaries of the Landscape Character Areas in the Norwich Policy Area defined by the 2001 Landscape Assessment continue to be robust and justifiable for inclusion within the Development Management Policies Document. In addition, the boundaries of the River Valley Designations within the Norwich Policy Area have been reviewed, and are also considered to be robust. No changes to boundaries of the Landscape Character Areas or River Valley extents are therefore required.

6.1.2 It is therefore recommended that the extents of the Landscape Character Area and River Valley policy areas shown on **Figure 3.1** are included in the Site Specific Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document.

6.2 Policy

6.2.1 In light of the desk-study, fieldwork and evaluation undertaken by CBA for the validation and review process described in this report, the following further changes (highlighted in ***bold italics***) to the suggested wording of the Landscape Character Areas and River Valleys policy for inclusion in the Site Specific Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document are recommended:

'All development should respect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the landscape character of its immediate and wider environment. Development will ~~not~~ be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would not significantly harm the ~~identified~~ distinctive landscape characteristics ~~character~~ of an area.

*All development will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken the following elements (from the **2001** South Norfolk Landscape Assessment **as updated by the 2012 review**) into account:*

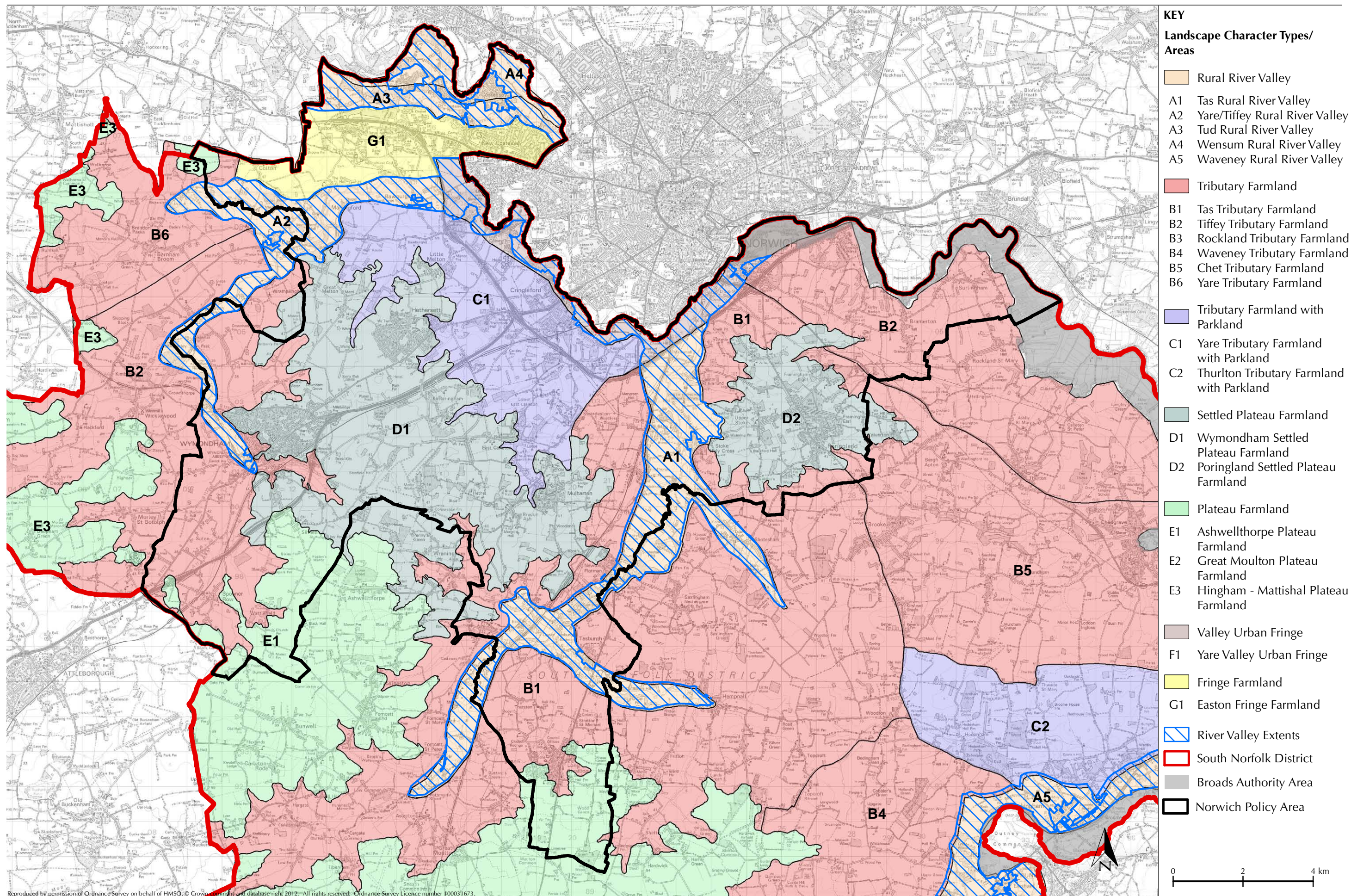
- *the key characteristics, assets, sensitivities and vulnerabilities;*
- *the landscape strategy; and*
- *development considerations.*

Particular regard will be had to protecting the ~~special~~ distinctive characteristics ~~character~~, special qualities and geographical extents ~~identity~~ of the identified Rural River Valleys and Valley Urban Fringe landscape character types. ~~areas~~.

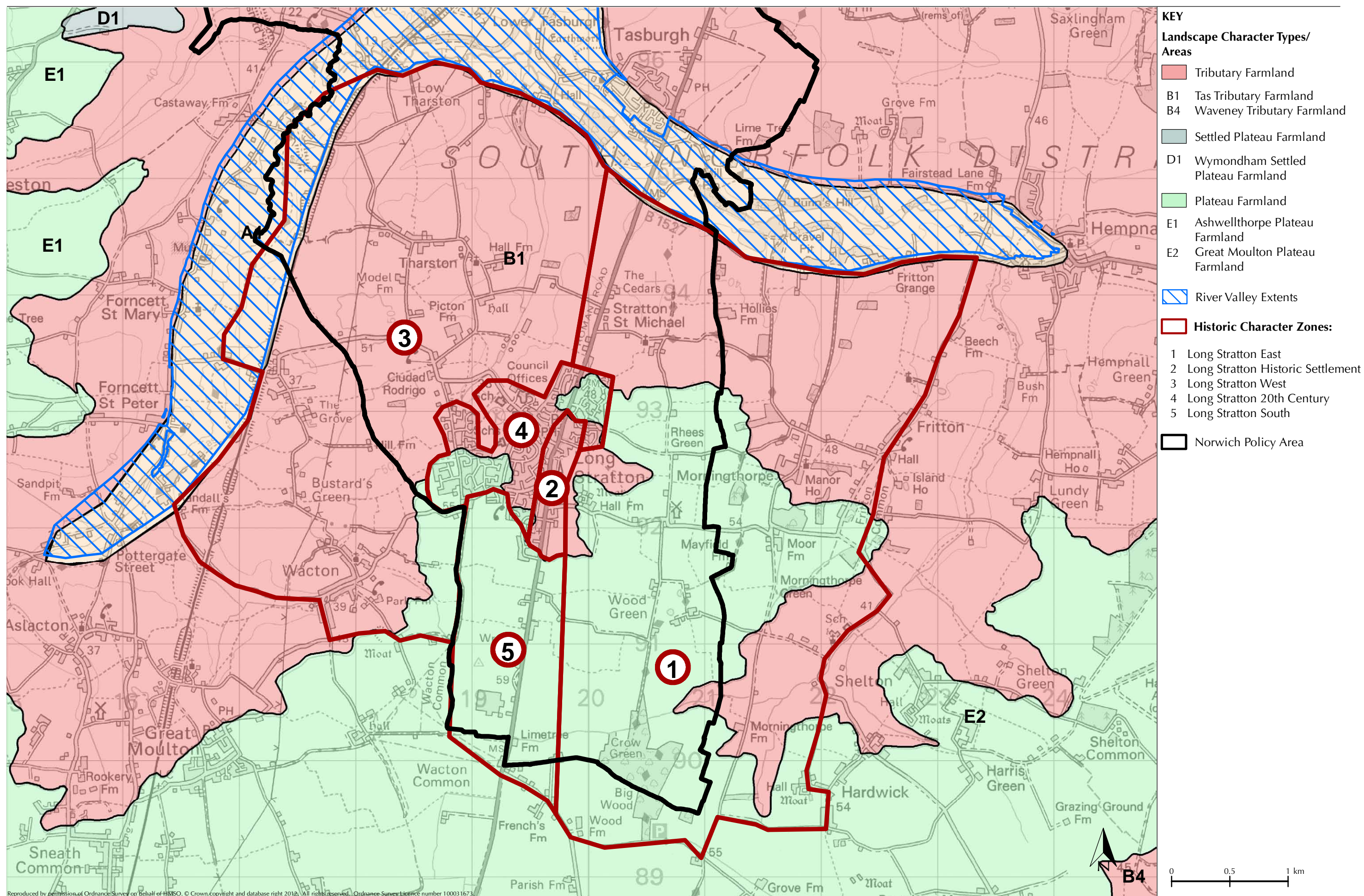
The landscape character areas and river valley extents (Rural River Valley and Valley Urban Fringe) ~~character areas~~ are shown on Map A).

- 6.2.2 CBA considers that the evidence base provided by Volume 2 of the 2001 Landscape Assessment, together with the updated information set out in Section 5.0 of this report, (to take into account changes in landscape character where there has been significant development or other types of landscape change since 2001, and to incorporate the findings of the Greater Norwich Historic Characterisation & Sensitivity Assessment), is sufficiently robust to justify the above policy going forward. This is in line with NPPF requirements, Joint Core Strategy objectives and also inspectors' advice on recent planning appeals for development sites in the Norwich Policy Area.

FIGURES



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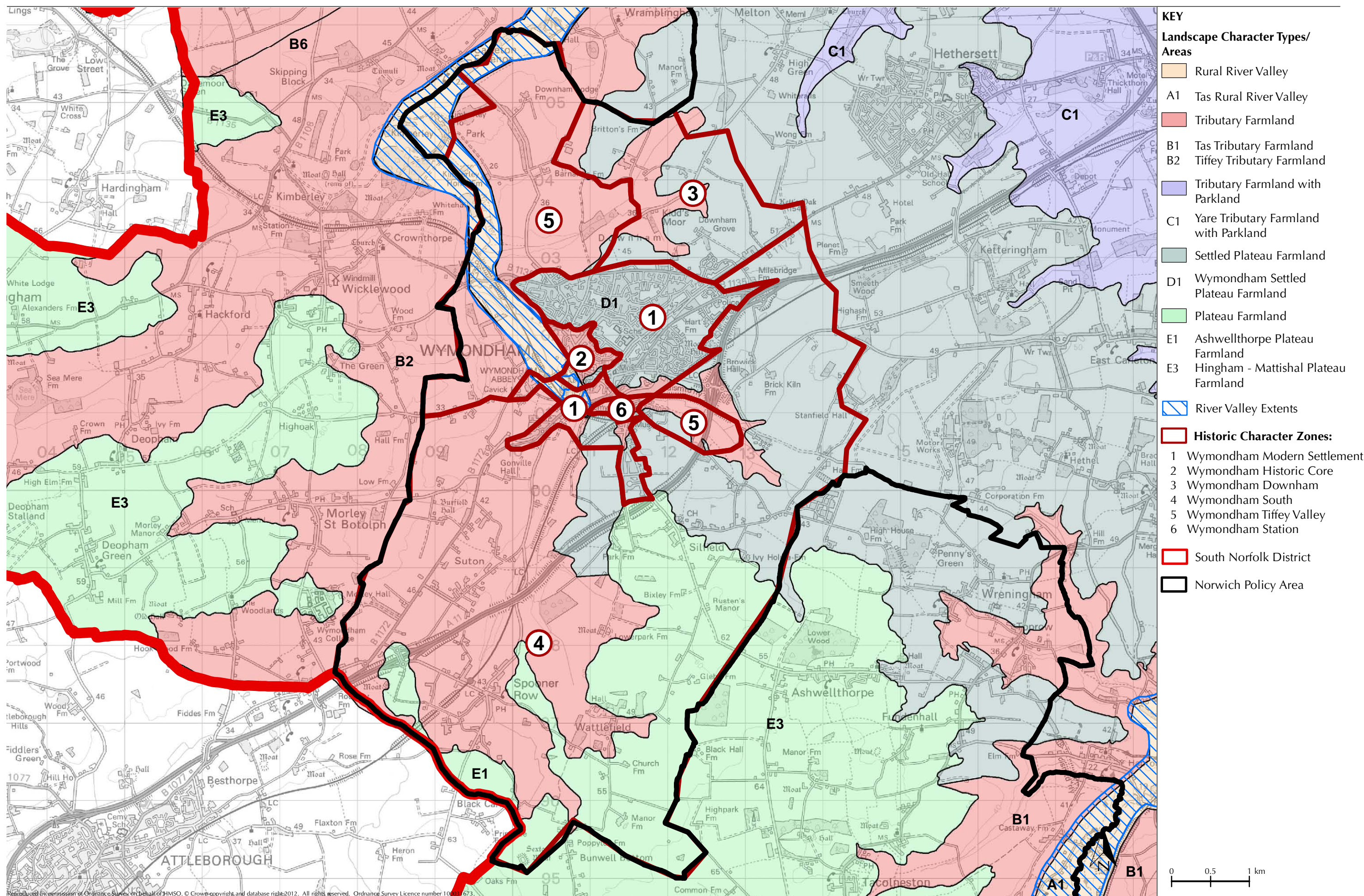


FIGURE 3.2b
Historic Character Zones
around Wymondham

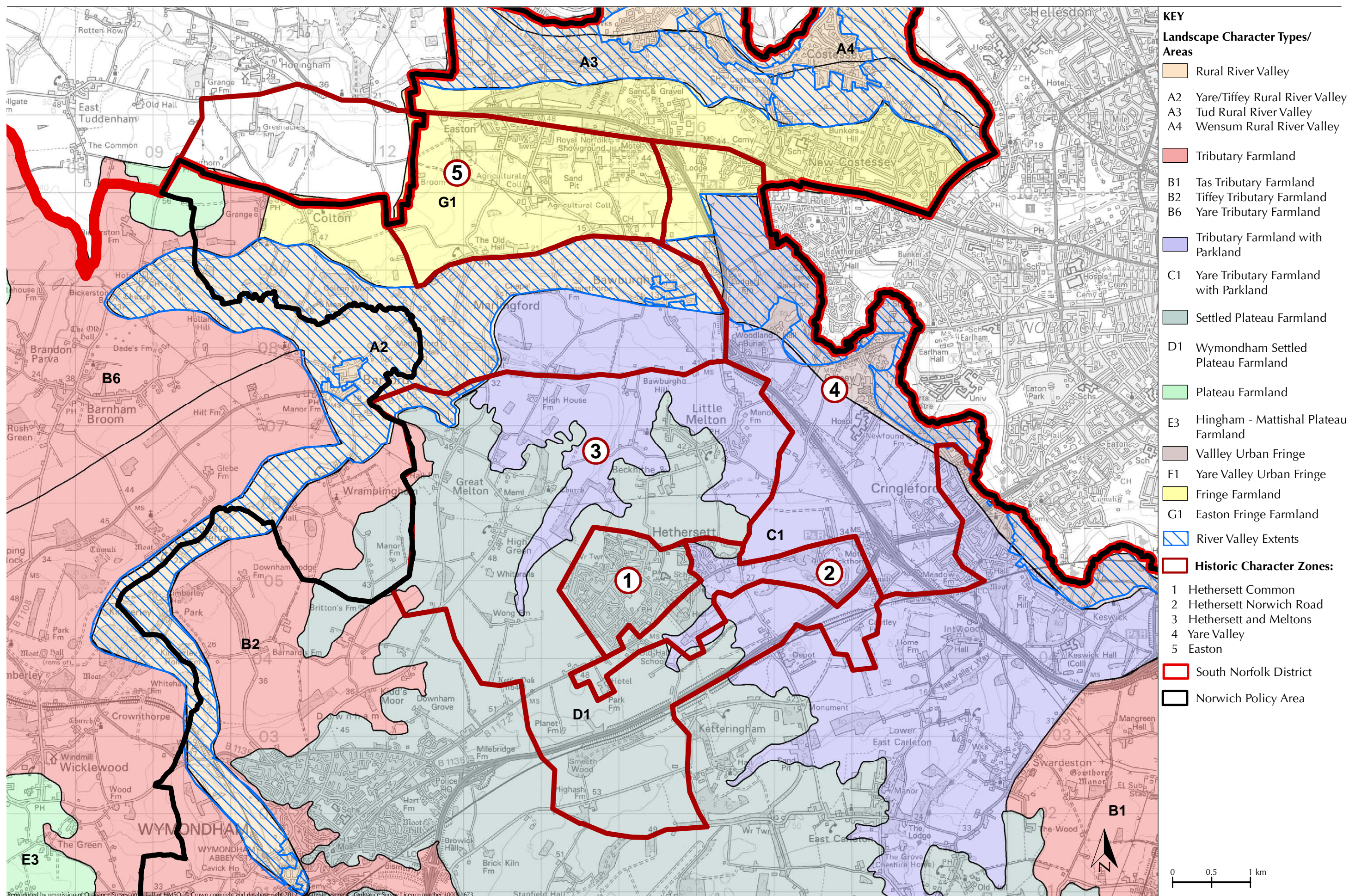
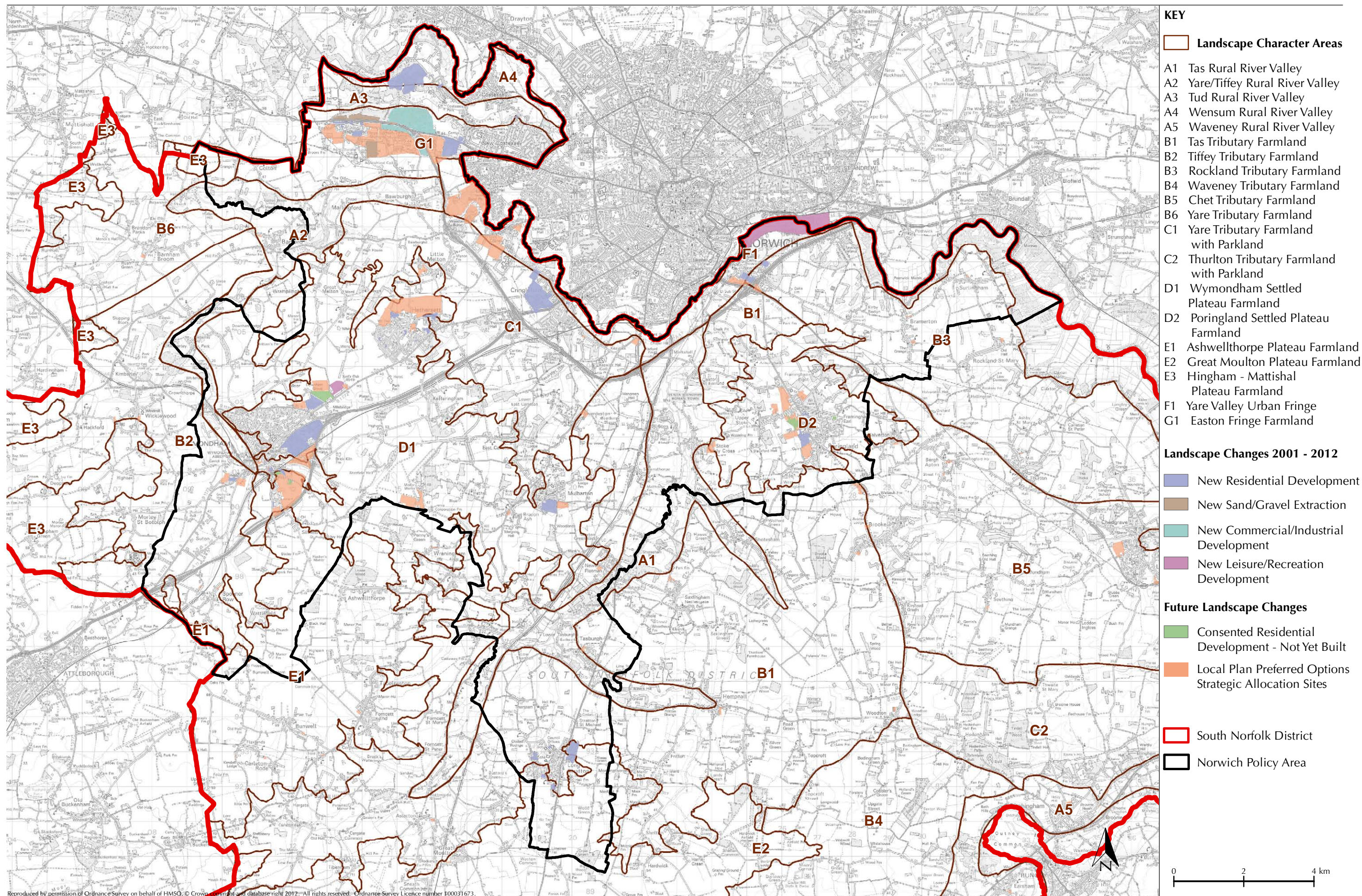


FIGURE 3.2c
Historic Character Zones
around Hethersett - Easton



APPENDIX A

Historic characterisation and sensitivity assessment

GNGP preferred option growth areas.



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~~Appendix 1: Steering group membership~~

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1.0 Introduction

This historic characterisation and sensitivity assessment project for the GNGP has been undertaken in the context of a legislative framework which acknowledges the importance of the wider, undesignated historic landscape. The importance of taking account of the historical dimension of the landscape in defining planning policies and development plans is encapsulated in 2.26 of PPG15 (1994):

In defining planning policies for the countryside, authorities should take account of the historical dimension of the landscape as a whole rather than concentrate on selected areas. Adequate understanding is an essential preliminary and authorities should assess the wider historic landscape at an early stage in development plan preparation.

More recently PPS1 *Delivering Sustainable Development* (2005) considers the historic environment to come under the umbrella of environmental protection more generally, and includes in its objectives the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, stating that planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas *as a whole*.

The *East of England Plan* (2008) states that 'plans, policies programmes and proposals should identify, protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of the region, its archaeology, historic buildings, and places and historic landscapes, including those features and sites (and their settings) especially significant in the East of England'. It goes on to define these further and includes 'the rural landscapes of the region, which are highly distinctive and of ancient origin.'

The Plan also states that in areas identified for growth and regeneration, it is important that the impact of new development on the historic environment is properly understood and considered; and that policies should be founded on a robust evidence base, and reflect a thorough understanding of the historic environment and enhancement opportunities through approaches such as historic environment characterisation. Characterisation produces an area-based generalised understanding of how places and landscapes have evolved and how their historic character might be appreciated, and is concerned with context and character rather than with individual sites and their fabric. A number of other growth point partnerships have produced such characterisation work to help inform development plans, recognising that a detailed understanding of the existing patterns on the ground can inform and help integrate the design of new development within it.

This characterisation and sensitivity assessment has been compiled by the Heritage & Landscape Team and Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, at Norfolk County Council, for the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP). The following sections set out the scope of the characterisation project in the

GNGP, and explain the methodology for designating historic environment character zones and for assessing their sensitivity.

2.0 Scope

This report is divided into four study areas which between them cover all the identified preferred areas for development as set out under the GNDP joint core strategy. The four areas are:

- Long Stratton
- Wymondham
- Hethersett-Easton
- North-east Norwich

Each study area is divided into a number of zones identified through a desk-based study of historic landscape character, archaeology and historic built environment patterns. The characterisation process does not aim to plot the separate components of these landscape areas but to map a generalised depiction of overall historic landscape character.

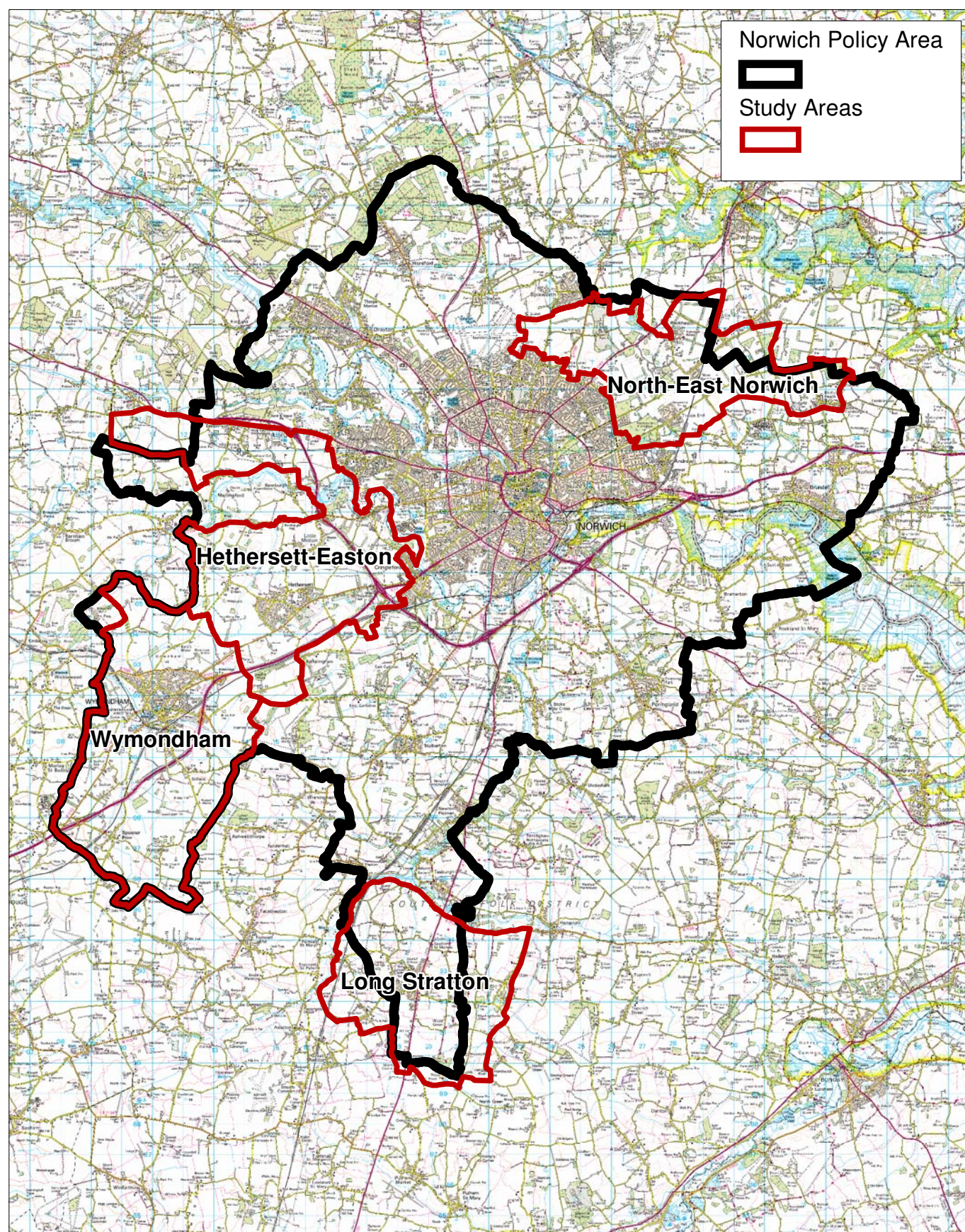
The report consists of an evidence-based analysis of historic character of the four study areas, which produced a number of zones; and assessments of sensitivity based on this analysis. Although a number of preliminary areas have been identified as possible sites for development under the joint core strategy, this report does not make recommendations regarding specific sites. Instead, the report is intended to inform future decision-making on siting and design of proposed development.

Figure 1. Study Areas

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology
Union House
Gressenhall
East Dereham
Norfolk
NR20 4DR



Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009



3.0 Methodology

The analysis consists of two stages. In stage one zones of separate historic landscape character are identified, and in the second stage the sensitivity to change of these character zones is assessed.

3.1 *Historic characterisation zones*

Identification of zones was through a desk-based study of the areas which contain proposed sites for development under the GNDP joint core strategy. Data-sets studied included:

- Historic maps (Faden's map (1790-94); OS map 1st Edition (1879 - 1886); Tithe maps)
- Current OS 1:25,000
- Entries on the Historic Environment Record (HER)
- Lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest
- Norfolk Historic Landscape Characterisation data
- National Character Areas (NCAs).
- Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs)

NCAs set out at strategic level what landscape features characterise or typify an area. They are useful in providing a baseline from which to measure the extent 'typical' or expected features survive in the current landscape, and were influential in identifying differences between zones.

Desk-based research was followed up with field visits to check information. Through comparing maps, and layering the other datasets, clear zones emerged of settlement patterns and land use which, because of variable determinants such as land ownership, geology and major road routes, differed significantly to adjacent areas. The draft zone boundaries were tested and validated through consultation with the officer steering group (see Appendix 1 for membership of the group).

It should be noted that unlike boundaries drawn on a page, 3-D landscapes do not (usually) stop and start abruptly either side of a line. The character zone boundaries should therefore be regarded as indicative of areas of general difference, and it should be expected that a more gradual and uneven change in character will be found on the ground.

Issues/Constraints

The Countryside Agency's Topic Paper 5: *Understanding Historic Landscape Character*¹ states that ideally historic characterisation should be carried out before district-level Landscape Character Assessments, so that the results can be used to inform the LCA; and, similarly that site-based data held on county HERs is best used for post characterisation analysis against the

¹ Jointly produced by Scottish Natural Heritage, The Countryside Agency, English Heritage and Historic Scotland (2002) p8-9

characterisation base-map. Due to the time constraints of this project, characterisation was carried out after the production of LCAs for the area, and simultaneously with analysis of the HER data. It was initially anticipated that historic characterisation zones would 'nest' within the LCA areas, but this was not always the case. Archaeological character zones based on the HER data were usually on a smaller scale than the characterisation zones, but did not always 'nest' within the same boundaries. It is hoped that in future reviews, and with more time, the relationships of these separate datasets can be re-assessed and refined to produce more cohesive and inter-related character areas. To assist in cross-referencing, LCA areas and archaeological character zones are identified at the beginning of each zone report.

Time constraints also precluded the study of a wider area. For future planning purposes, the production of characterisation zones for the whole of the GNGP, and for the wider county, would be advantageous, in order to provide a more complete understanding of the county's historic landscape, which would, in turn, contribute to informed planning policy. For example, the area east of Long Stratton is clearly related to an area of remnant greens and commons which extend to the south east, but this relationship could not be explored within the limits of this report. In addition, a more complete study would allow for a refined assessment of the zones identified in this report, when set within a county context - for example, how rare a particular land-use feature actually is within the wider area. Access to this information would provide useful and informed guidance at an early stage in the planning process on the siting and design of future development in other areas.

3.2 Sensitivity assessment

Once zones were identified, an assessment was made of their sensitivity to change.

The methodology for assessing sensitivity of the preferred growth areas was based on the model published by Hampshire County Council in 2006 which was given a commendation in the Strategic Landscape Planning category of the 2007 Landscape Institute Awards.²

In the Hampshire model the methodology for assessing landscape sensitivity at a strategic level is based on an approach which judges the landscape as a whole, taking into account a number of components which should be included in every landscape assessment:

- Physical landscape
- Experiential landscape
- Biodiversity
- Historic environment
- Visibility

² *Assessing Landscape Sensitivity at a Strategic Level; A description of the methodology* Hampshire County Council (2006)

The full Hampshire model can be found at:
<http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk/node/156>

In this project the historic environment component of the model's assessment process has been undertaken. It is hoped that a similar approach might be applied to the other components in the future so that an in-depth and balanced approach to the whole landscape can be achieved for the GNGP area, and the wider county.

A qualitative approach

The purpose of this report is to assess the sensitivity of the wider, undesignated landscape of the GNGP area. Though the presence of groups of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas and listed parks has been taken into account, these are included as components of a wider context, produced from relationships between land-use, communication networks, geology, land ownership and settlement patterns. For example, a much richer understanding of the listed 16th and 17th century buildings at Wood Green (Long Stratton) is obtained when they are seen as a coherent group of small farmsteads gathered around the edge of a still extant common, and part of a network of other nearby common-edge settlements and road side commons.

These complex and infinitely variable inter-relationships cannot be easily or meaningfully categorised in a quantitative way. Instead, this study takes a more qualitative approach. Each zone report summarises briefly what is known about the earlier landscapes of the area, and what survives as visible and recognisable features in the current landscape. The *significance* and *robustness* of these features are then assessed in a regional context using the definitions from the Hampshire model:

Definitions of significance and robustness:

Significance: gives an indication of **rarity**, e.g. designations, (SSSI's, SAMs). It provides an understanding of the **representativeness / essence** of that attribute and how it is manifest or apparent in landscape character. It is also used to determine the extent to which the attribute **dominates, is distributed** or is **prevalent** and **how it contributes** to landscape setting.

Robustness: this is an inherent property of an attribute and provides an understanding of their vulnerability and fragility. Robustness can be considered in the context of likely threats drawn from local knowledge or identified in the LCA. It is informed by judgements on **whether the attribute is damageable, replicable, repairable or replaceable, and over what timescale it might recover.**³

In assessing the above two indicators a third is taken into account:

Condition: is closely associated with Significance and Robustness, and an understanding of condition will influence the judgements on significance and robustness. The judgement is made on the basis of local knowledge, taking account of **how well the attribute has been preserved/ conserved**. It is an indicator of the **level and quality of management**. It is also a judgement on the level of **intactness**.

Sensitivity = significance and robustness combined

It should be noted that sensitivity is based on both **significance AND robustness**. It would be an easy mistake to assume that an area judged to be of high sensitivity is necessarily more *important* than an area judged to be of only medium sensitivity. An area may be of high historical significance – for example, the core of a historic market town – but is likely to be protected and valued, so that robustness could also be high. If circumstances were to change, and protective legislation was overruled or an economic downturn meant that the condition of buildings deteriorated, then assessment of robustness would change and the overall sensitivity would increase. Although some aspects of robustness are inherent (for example, a ruined building will be inherently less robust than a complete one), robustness can also be altered by circumstance, such as the affects of proposed development. Sensitivity assessments are therefore not fixed, but will vary depending on changing circumstances.

3.3 Assessment process

The process of assessment was based on the professional judgements of a number of contributing officers from within different disciplines: archaeology, building conservation, history and landscape (see appendix 1 for officer group

³ Hampshire County Council ibid p 7

contributors). For each zone three broad headings were used to focus the assessment:

- Archaeology
- Historic Landscape Character
- Historic Built Environment

Archaeology (ARCH)

There is obviously overlap between the three headings – for example Wymondham Abbey church is both an historic building and an archaeological site. However, for the purposes of this report, the types of site discussed under the heading of *archaeology* are those where there is evidence of previous human activity visible in the landscape, but which do not consist of complete buildings or features – for example, moats, fish ponds, ruins, and other earthworks.

Because the study is an assessment of the sensitivity of the historic landscape topography, only groups of archaeological sites with visible components– those that might be recognised in the landscape or contribute to landscape character – have been included. Information on below-ground archaeological remains or patterns of find sites is not generally included, unless it contributes to an understanding of the above ground evidence.

The majority of archaeological sites are unprotected, fragile and easily destroyed through development and farming practices. In the report this is acknowledged by assuming that the robustness of such sites will almost always be low.

This desk-based report can only include currently known archaeological information. Lack of information on a particular area does not necessarily imply a lack of archaeological evidence, but rather, that the area simply has not been examined. There is therefore further potential in all areas for above ground evidence to be found through aerial photographic analysis and interpretation, field-walking etc.

Historic landscape character (HLC)

The national Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) mapping project aims to describe the extant landscape and determine its origins, enabling us to understand the time depth that exists in the landscape. Some areas may display evidence of several historical landscape processes and patterns, while others may exhibit one particular historic landscape process in a particularly fine or unique way - such as a self-contained landscaped park. HLC has recently been completed for Norfolk but work is still underway to create more continuity between county data sets. In this study historic maps have been used to supplement and provide the context for the HLC data on field and land-use systems.

The broad overview approach of this report means that more detailed local land use has not been investigated – for example, it is known that hemp growing was a major industry in parts of south Norfolk well into the 19th century (e.g. Hempnall), and that many of the ponds that still exist will have been used for processing the crop. Further investigation of such local land use might be considered at a future planning stage.

Broad regional settlement patterns have been established at national level, and can vary from large, nucleated villages to dispersed settlement areas, with scattered hamlets and farmsteads, both located within distinctive patterns of field systems.⁴ Aspects of this settlement morphology and how it has developed and changed over time are included under this category, as are historic road networks and routes which form the framework for settlement, and in some cases, determine their development.

Historic built environment (HBE)

The report does not attempt to assess the sensitivity of individual building types, or to highlight whether individual buildings are of particular architectural significance; the setting and importance of individual buildings will need to be judged in more detail at a future planning stage. Instead the report looks at how buildings are grouped to indicate settlement patterns, and how these affect the morphology of the current landscape.

This assessment is based on historic maps, the lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and conservation area appraisals, supplemented by field visits to look for other groups of traditional buildings. As with the former two headings, there is potential for further information, in this case particularly regarding *characteristic* types rather than *special* building types in each area, for example, unlisted farm buildings of a particular date (especially 19th century), construction and/or purpose

Assessment conclusions

Conclusions on significance and robustness are based on an assessment in a regional context, and given a level of either High, Medium or Low. It is important to note that the scales for significance and robustness run in opposite directions e.g. low significance = little impact on the landscape and therefore of lower importance; low robustness = vulnerable and fragile (see Fig 1 above). **A combination of high significance and low robustness will produce the highest sensitivity assessment.**

In a number of cases, specific features within a zone were judged to be of a different level of significance or robustness to the remainder of the zone, due to impacts on the surrounding landscape (as with the deer park in Wymondham) or specific potential vulnerabilities (such as the by-pass route in Stratton St Michael). Where this occurs the general sensitivity of the zone is

⁴ See Roberts, Dr B & Wrathmell, Dr S *An Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* (2000)

given in the report, along with a separate assessment for the specific feature in italics.

It should be emphasised that assessments of sensitivity in this report refer to aspects of the *historic* landscape only. Assessments based on other criteria such as biodiversity, or natural beauty, would not necessarily run parallel with the conclusions of this report. As stated in the introduction to the Hampshire model:

*It is the intention of this work that the components of landscape are considered in an integrated and equitable way, and where there is a need to make decisions about comparative importance that these are based on sound evidence.*⁵

⁵ Hampshire County Council *ibid* p 6

3.4 Sensitivity matrices

Once degrees of current significance and robustness were agreed on they were mapped on a matrix set out in Fig 2:

Fig 2 Sensitivity matrix

high	High	High-med	Medium
med	High-med	Medium	Low-med
low	Medium	Low-med	Low
	low	medium	high

^
Significance Robustness >

Significance runs from low to high on the vertical axis, and robustness runs from low (i.e. vulnerable) to high (i.e. robust) along the horizontal axis. So a category that was judged to have high significance and low robustness would land in the 'high' sensitivity box. Conversely, a category of low significance and high robustness would land in the 'low' box.

The significance and robustness of each heading within a zone was mapped onto the matrix as in Fig 3.

Fig 3: Sensitivity matrix example

For e.g. where

HLC: Significance: high
Robustness: low

ARCH: Significance: medium
Robustness: low

HBE : Significance: high
Robustness: medium

high			
med			
low			
	low	medium	high

^

Significance Robustness >

These results were then matched against a threshold table from the Hampshire model:

Fig 4 Hampshire Threshold criteria

Threshold criteria – generally HLC is most likely to have most influence in determining the overall historic environment sensitivity for this study	Overall historic environment sensitivity
HLC – high and at least one of archaeology or historic built environment high medium Exceptional archaeological or historic built or a combination judged to be high	High
Two of the components high-medium and the third at least medium	High Medium
HLC medium with at least one of archaeology or historic built env medium HLC low medium with archaeology and historic built env at least medium HLC could be low but at least one of the other two historic components judged to be high-medium and the other at least medium	Medium
HLC likely to be low-medium HLC could be medium with the other two components judged to be low	Low medium
HLC likely to be low, one of archaeology or historic built env could be low medium	Low

In the Fig 3 example HLC was judged to be high and the other two categories high-medium. Under the threshold criteria this makes the **overall** sensitivity assessment 'High'.

The sensitivity scale of measurement includes High-medium; Medium; and Low-medium. It is important to note that these represent real differences of sensitivity, and should not be regarded as a general 'medium'. High-Medium sensitivity is of real significance; and a medium overall sensitivity suggests development will have an impact and potentially cause a degree of harm. Inevitably, within each character zone, there is variability in the degree of sensitivity to development and this should be addressed at the next planning stage. Characterisation of each zone, set out fully in the appendix of this report provides the background for both developing mitigation strategies to limit impact; and to inform design of proposed development.

In order to make this report easy to use, only the summary discussion on sensitivity is included in the body of the report, together with the **overall** sensitivity assessment level. All the matrices and more detailed discussion notes on reasoning behind the judgements have been gathered together in appendix 2.

3.5 *Future study*

As noted before, this report is almost entirely desk-based, and is a very rapid overview of current available information. There is huge scope for further research and increased detail, particularly from field study. The assessments of sensitivity should not therefore be considered as set in stone. Future input from other sources should be welcomed, and may have the potential to alter sensitivity categories; as would any changing circumstances regarding potential threat and vulnerabilities.

4 Sensitivity summary reports

- Study Area 1: Long Stratton
- Study Area 2: Wymondham
- Study Area 3: Hethersett-Easton
- ~~Study Area 4: North East Norwich~~

:

Study Area: 1

LONG STRATTON

Overview

The growth areas proposed in the vicinity of Long Stratton sit within the national landscape character area 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk claylands which are characterised by a mix of remnant medieval 'Ancient Countryside', early co-axial field patterns and large modern fields devoid of hedges and trees. It is almost entirely arable, except for pasture in river valleys, remnant parkland, commons and greens; there are few major transport routes, but an extensive network of narrow lanes and byroads.

'Ancient Countryside' is characterised by settlements consisting of isolated farmsteads, hall/church complexes, and common-edge or roadside strings of houses forming 'hamlets', all linked by tracks, which survive as footpaths, tracks, lanes and roads in the current landscape. Within this dispersed settlement pattern are larger settlements – such as Long Stratton - which act as markets and service centres. These focal settlements often developed their own town-field systems which contrasted with land-use systems in the surrounding area.

Within this particular area the Roman Pye Road (A140) is a significant feature, visible in the landscape, and the reason for Long Stratton's location. In addition the road influences the shape and arrangement of field boundaries either side of its length, and possibly the layout of the ancient road network, particularly to its east.

Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 1: Long Stratton

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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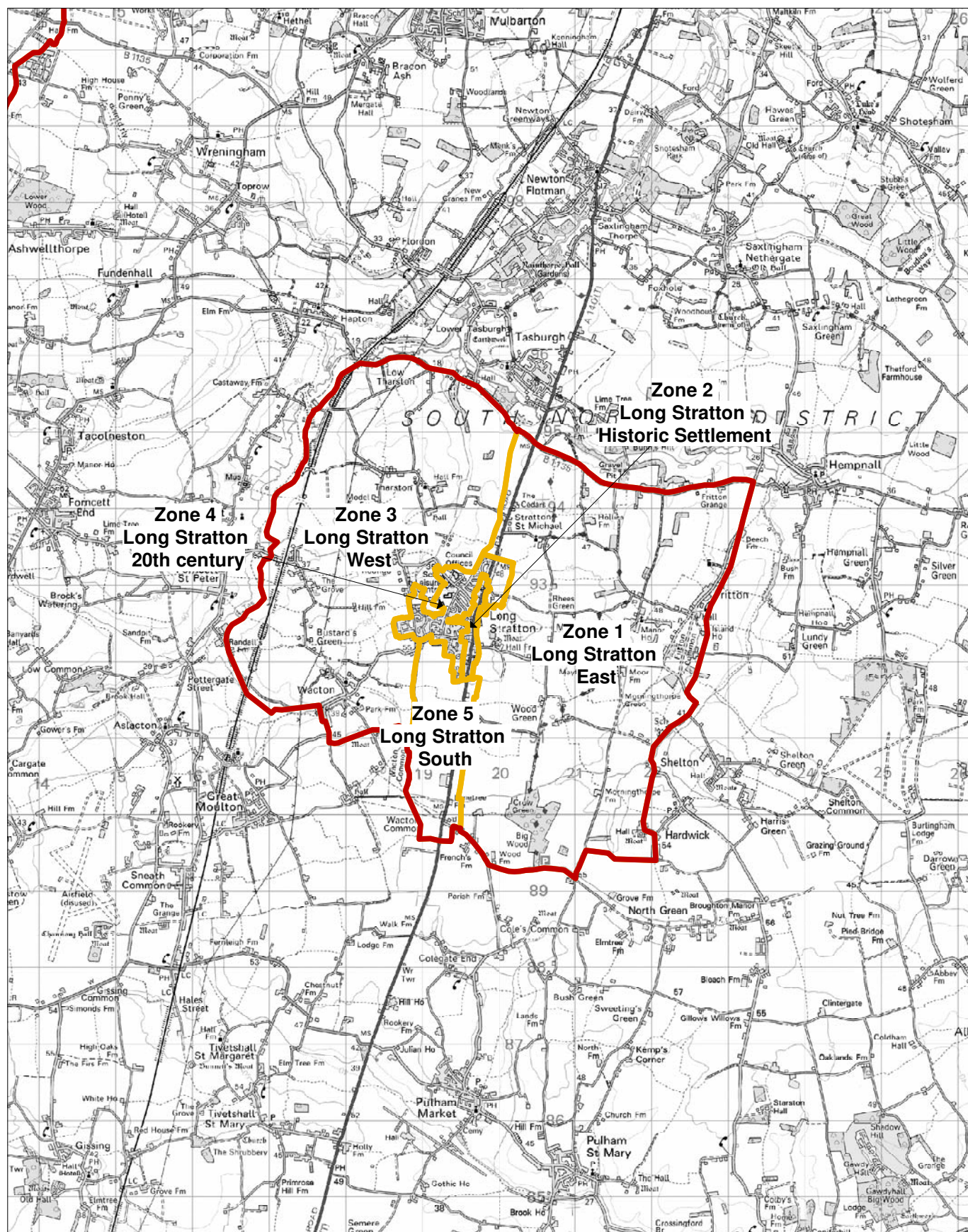
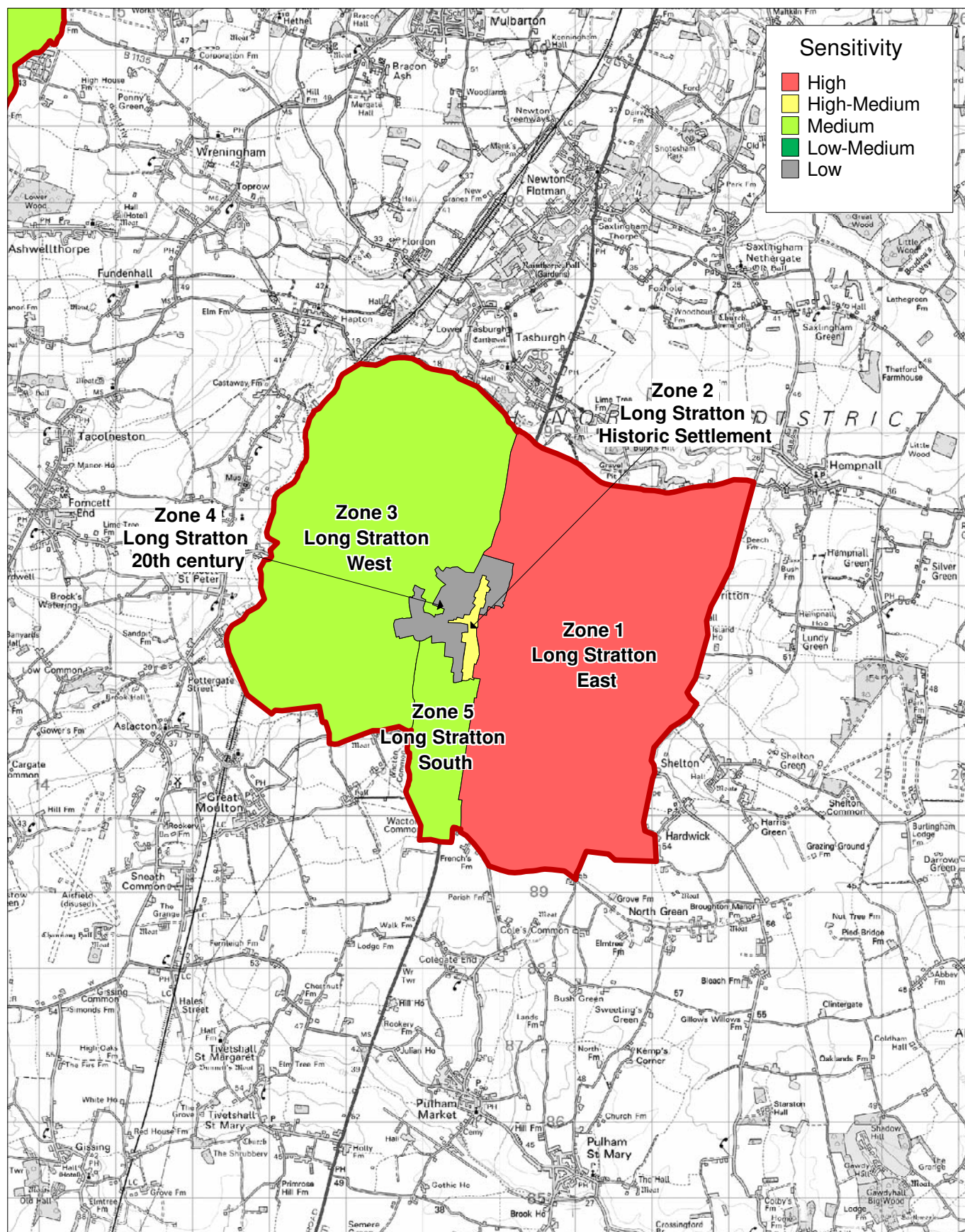


Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 1: Long Stratton

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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Zone: 1 Long Stratton East

LCA cross reference

E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland B1 Tas Tributary Farmland
--

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 55, 57 and 59

Characteristics summary

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• grid system of track ways• Remnant medieval settlements with related earthworks• Greens and commons• boundary loss• Areas of piecemeal enclosure by agreement• Isolated farmsteads• 16th/17th century vernacular buildings• small 18th-20th century woodland plantations |
|--|

Qualitative summary

<p>This zone retains a high number of features of typical 'Ancient' countryside, with a significant number of surviving greens, cohesive settlements of timber-framed buildings grouped around them, church/hall complexes and an extensive network of ancient track ways linking them together. In addition, the zone contains a rare grid system of lanes which dates from at least the medieval period, and may well be much earlier. There is little evidence of modern housing development – a few 20th century ex-local authority houses in Morningthorpe - so that the zone has a strong 16th/17th century character. The most significant change in recent times has been loss of hedgerow boundaries, particularly adjacent to Long Stratton. Robustness is affected by the proposed Long Stratton bypass which, as proposed, will cut across the lane grid system. The setting of settlements and archaeological sites would also be affected.</p>

Overall sensitivity assessment

Zone: 1 Long Stratton East	HIGH
-----------------------------------	-------------

Zone: 2 Long Stratton historic settlement
--

LCA cross reference

B1 Tas Tributary Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 51

Characteristics summary

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roman Road and associated archaeological remains• 16/17th century and later historic buildings• linear settlement pattern• market centre |
|--|

Qualitative summary

<p>The historic core of Long Stratton is still an easily visible coherent grouping of 16th and 17th century timber-framed houses and shops which provided goods and services for the dispersed settlements in the surrounding countryside – and still does. The Roman Road which forms its spine, is the reason for its location, and for its linear shape, but in modern times, increased traffic on the road has brought an erosion of character through dirt, noise and preventing easy passage from one side to the other. Modern infill between the old church/hall complex and the market has diluted the historic cohesion of the settlement – but has continued its role as a service centre. Although extensive development either side of the road has distorted the linear pattern, this is not at present easily perceivable when travelling through the historic core. Further development in the hinterland either side of the road would be likely to have more impact on the wider landscape of other zones than within the inward-looking and largely contained historic street – unless the new development was taller and out of scale with the historic buildings. The cohesive group of historic buildings and the recognisable archaeological feature of the Roman Road which has shaped the settlement pattern of the village influences significance. Robustness is affected by modern infill and potential future development, and the busy road which has eroded character.</p>

Overall sensitivity assessment

Zone 2 Long Stratton historic settlement

HIGH-MEDIUM

Zone: 3 Long Stratton west

LCA cross reference

B1 Tas Tributary Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 53, 54, 58

Characteristics summary

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roman, Saxon & Medieval archaeological sites.• Deserted villages• Dispersed farmsteads• Common greens• 16th/17th century timber-framed buildings• boundary loss |
|--|

Qualitative summary

<p>This zone reflects the dispersed settlement pattern of 'Ancient' countryside, with its dispersed farmsteads and tiny hamlets focused around church/halls. However, it differs from the east side of Long Stratton in having lost all its greens which provided the context for the 16th/17th century farmhouses that survive. There has been considerable erosion of field boundaries. The farms along Chequers Lane which once lined Tharston Common (Chequers Farm, Spreading Oak Farm, Poplars Farm and Ciudad Rodrigo) are now on the edge of Long Stratton's western expansion, and have largely lost their rural setting. In general, the typical elements of the dispersed settlement pattern are still discernible in the current landscape, but the loss of the greens network has eroded the cohesion of these elements reducing the overall significance of the zone. Robustness is influenced by the existing loss which reduces potential vulnerability, and the protection of the remaining historic building asset.</p>

Overall sensitivity assessment

Zone: 3 West of Long Stratton	MEDIUM
--------------------------------------	---------------

Zone: 4 Long Stratton 20th century settlement**LCA cross reference**

B1 Tas Tributary Farmland
E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 52

Characteristics summary

- Field and road patterns
- Settlement pattern
- Archaeological remains

Qualitative summary

This zone has only minimal traces of historic character. Though street names may reflect the former existence of the Manor House and the survival of the ice-house, the area is strongly characterised by 20th century planned housing estate which has, by and large, been super-imposed upon the existing landscape. Lack of significant historic features and minimal potential for loss affect significance and robustness levels.

Overall sensitivity assessment

Zone: Long Stratton 20thC Settlement	LOW
---	------------

NB

Though this area has low sensitivity, it does have the potential to impact on adjacent zones, in particular, in continuing to distort the historic linear pattern of settlement along the old Roman Road.

Zone: 5 Long Stratton south**LCA cross reference**

E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 55

Characteristics summary

- Dispersed farmsteads
- Commons and greens
- Piecemeal enclosure
- Roman Road

Qualitative summary

This area has historically been sparsely populated and remains a zone of dispersed farmsteads strung out along the road. The Roman Road is a highly visible and easily understood archaeological feature in the landscape. However, the agricultural landscape is strongly 20th century and this is the dominant character of the zone now. The visible settlement pattern and recognisable archaeological feature of the Roman Road affects significance. Erosion of pre-20th century field patterns, and vulnerability to modern-in-fill affects robustness.

Overall sensitivity assessment**Zone 5 Long Stratton south****MEDIUM**

Study Area: 2

WYMONDHAM

Overview

The growth areas proposed in the vicinity of Wymondham sit within the national landscape character area 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk claylands which are characterised by a mix of remnant medieval 'Ancient Countryside', early co-axial field patterns and large modern fields devoid of hedges and trees. It is almost entirely arable, except for pasture in river valleys, remnant parkland, commons and greens; there are few major transport routes, but an extensive network of narrow lanes and byroads.

'Ancient Countryside' is characterised by settlements consisting of isolated farmsteads, hall/church complexes, and common-edge or roadside strings of houses forming 'hamlets', all linked by tracks, which survive as footpaths, tracks, lanes and roads in the current landscape. Within this dispersed settlement pattern are larger settlements – such as Wymondham - which act as markets and service centres. These focal settlements often developed their own town-field systems which contrasted with land-use systems in the surrounding area.

The parish of Wymondham is remarkably large, and is thought to be the rare survival of an intact Anglo-Saxon royal or aristocratic estate which, unlike other estates, was never divided up into more numerous smaller units which later became the basis of the parish system. It is also suggested that the parish was the site of a minster, common in the early days of Christianity, but usually fragmented during the Saxon period. It is not fully understood why these changes never occurred in Wymondham. There is an absence of church/hall settlements within the parish which is a variant on the 'Ancient' countryside settlement type.

In the 10th century the route between Viking-established Norwich and Thetford passing through Wymondham increased in importance, bringing with it extra trade and prosperity. During the late 11th and 12th centuries the area was further transformed through the ownership of the d'Aubigny family, who founded the Priory (which became an Abbey later), created two deer parks, and built a castle.

Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 2: Wymondham

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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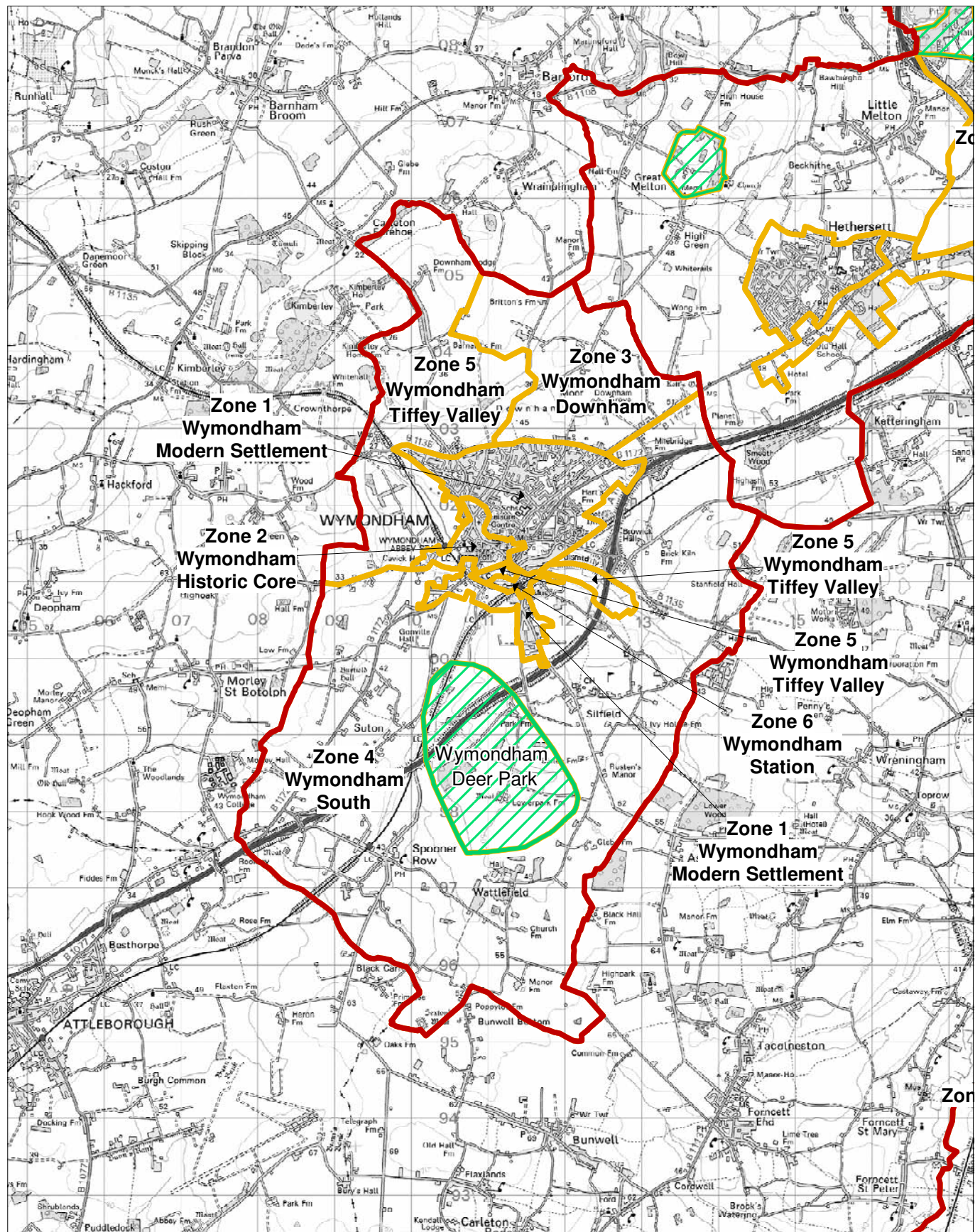
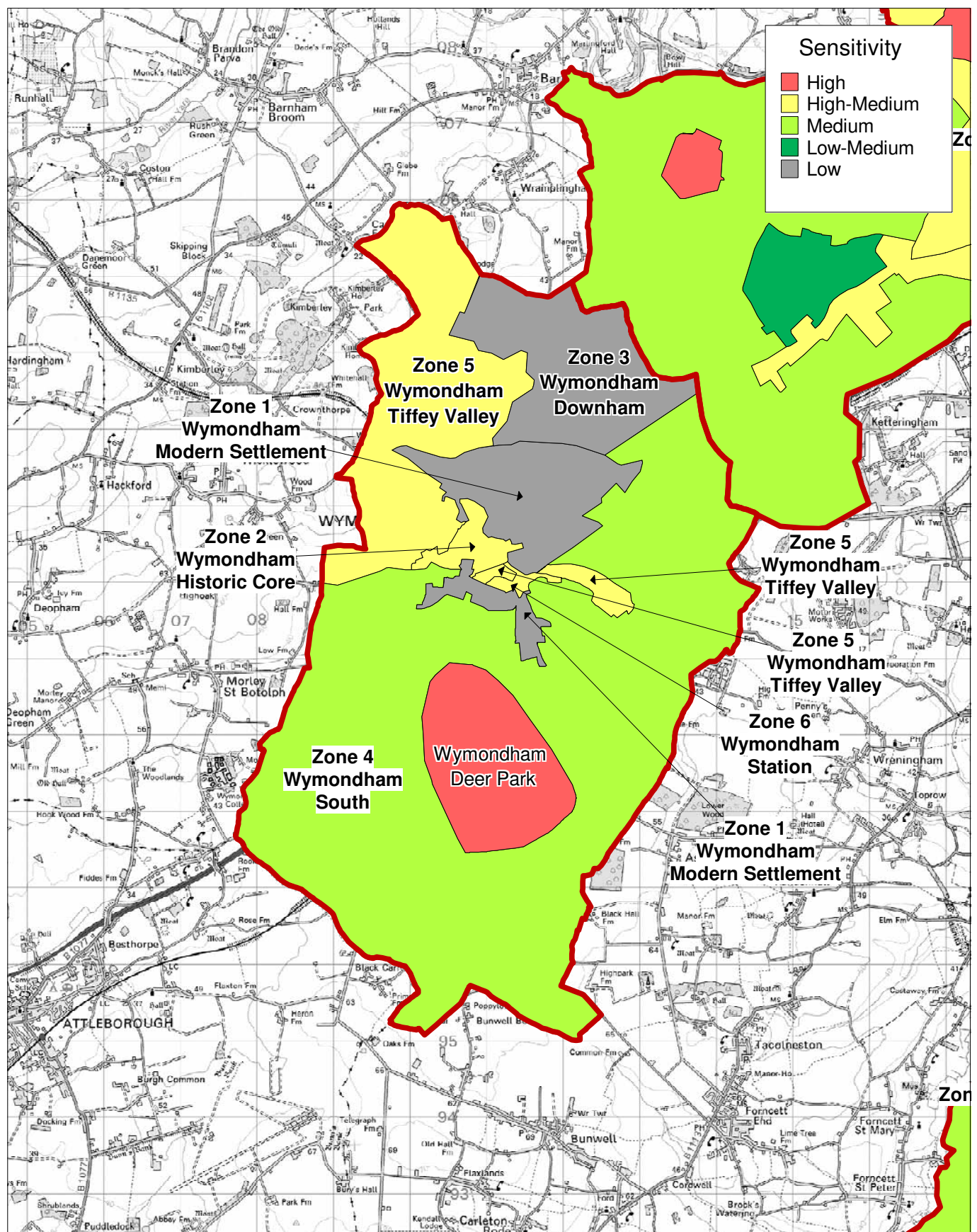


Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 2: Wymondham

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology
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Norfolk
NR20 4DR



Zone: 1 Wymondham**LCA cross reference**

D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 43 and 44

Characteristics summary

- Historic roads and trackways
- Boundary loss
- Industrial archaeology

Qualitative summary

This zone has been entirely re-developed during the second half of the 20th century, in a series of large housing estates built within a network of estate roads and cul-de-sacs laid out between the historic road framework, and more recent business and industrial parks. There is little or no surviving evidence of previous historic landscape features. Lack of evidence for time-depth affects significance; and previous loss reduces vulnerability.

Overall sensitivity assessment

Zone 1 Wymondham C20th	LOW
-------------------------------	------------

Zone: 2 Wymondham Historic Core**LCA cross reference**

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 45

Characteristics summary

- Cohesive group of historic buildings from the 15th century onwards
- Medieval market
- Wymondham Abbey site
- Major historic route
- Commons and greens

Qualitative summary

The town retains a strongly cohesive historic core, with a high number of historic buildings from the 15th century-19th century. The road network and footprint of the town reflects the development of the medieval settlement pattern, and the visual relationship with the important Abbey site remains strong. The Tiffey river valley to the west and south of the town has limited modern housing growth so that the sense of a small historic town in a rural landscape is still largely intact on approach from the north, along the Tiffey valley boundary, and from the west. The development of housing and business parks either side of the B1172 approach from the north-east and more recently to the south-west has eroded the rural setting in these areas. However, the town's relationship to the 1950s by-pass (which to an extent encapsulated the settlement's historic southern boundary), means that most vehicular access to the historic core is through a fairly 'thin' modern development area. The north-eastern boundary merges into an extensive area of 20th century housing development, which is largely self-contained, with no main approaches through it to the town. It therefore has little direct impact on the historic core in a visual sense, although it has, of course, destroyed the rural setting of the town in this direction. Significance is influenced by the highly cohesive and well-preserved medieval settlement pattern, a post-medieval buildings. Robustness is affected by erosion of the setting of the historic core, but ameliorated by the levels of protection and generally good condition of the zone.

Overall sensitivity assessment

Wymondham historic core	HIGH-MEDIUM
--------------------------------	--------------------

Zone: 3 Wymondham Downham**LCA cross reference**

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 34, 35, 36, 42

Characteristics summary

- Dispersed farmsteads
- Field boundaries
- Commons and greens
- Boundary loss

Qualitative summary

This zone appears to have been sparsely populated for many centuries with little or no evidence of medieval or earlier settlements. It is characterized by isolated farms which stand on sites marking the edge of large areas of common, now under arable cultivation. The majority of the surviving buildings are later than the post-medieval farmsteads or much altered, the commons are gone, and the majority of 19th century field boundaries have also been eroded so that little visible evidence survives of the pre-20th century landscape. Loss of historic features affects significance and reduces potential for future vulnerability.

Overall sensitivity assessment

Zone 3: Wymondham Downham	LOW
----------------------------------	------------

Zone: 4 Wymondham South

LCA cross reference

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau
E1 Ashwellthorpe Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 34, 40, 42, 44, 49

Characteristics summary

- Medieval moats and earthworks
- Medieval deer parks
- Post-medieval halls
- Dispersed common-edge settlement
- Isolated farms
- Common green
- Post-medieval field boundaries
- Boundary loss
- Historic roads

Qualitative summary

This area was dotted with moated manors in the medieval period, and a relatively high number survive as visible features in the landscape, three of them associated with post-medieval halls. The southern deer park is difficult to see as a cohesive whole on the ground due to its isolation and lack of access. However, most of its outer boundary survives in current field boundaries, emphasised by road routes; and survival of the moat, and further evidence in place names provide enough evidence to understand this area as a piece of landscape originating in the 12th century.

Post-medieval settlement was associated with commons, all of which have been enclosed and taken into arable. Relatively few of the 16th/17th century houses associated with common-edge settlement have survived, though a number of later buildings mark their sites. Pre-nineteenth century enclosure boundaries have been eroded to a great extent through field amalgamation in the 20th century. Development of traffic corridors has brought about an extension to the town settlement pattern into this zone, for the first time. The rest of the zone remains sparsely populated with relatively little 20th century in-fill but retains few survivals of historic field and land use systems, or cohesive evidence of the post-medieval common-edge settlement pattern. Erosion of historic features reduces significance of the general area and pre-existing loss reduces potential vulnerability, raising robustness. However, the deer park remains a visible and fairly cohesive feature in the landscape and is therefore judged separately.

Overall sensitivity assessment

4 Wymondham South	<i>MEDIUM</i> <i>(Deer Park HIGH-MEDIUM)</i>
--------------------------	---

Zone: 5 Wymondham Tiffey Valley
--

LCA cross reference

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 36, 40, 41, 42

Characteristics summary

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• River valley• Field boundaries of late 18th/19th century enclosure• Isolated 19th century farmsteads• Abbey at head of the valley |
|---|

Qualitative summary

<p>This zone is characterised by very dispersed isolated farmsteads related to 19th century enclosure, and retains a largely 19th century field boundary pattern fossilised in ditches and some hedges. The river Tiffey and its wet meadows have prevented more extensive settlement or intensive land use so that a relatively cohesive historic landscape of the 19th century has been preserved. Town Green forms an important foreground to the Abbey which dominates the head of the valley. Good survival of historic features influences significance, and vulnerability to changes in land management and setting reduce robustness.</p>
--

Overall sensitivity assessment

5 Wymondham Tiffey valley	HIGH-MEDIUM
----------------------------------	--------------------

Zone: 6 Wymondham Station

LCA cross reference

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 45

Characteristics summary

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 19th century industrial development• 19th century designed landscape feature |
|---|

Qualitative summary

<p>This zone consists of a 19th century industrial landscape imposed upon formerly unsettled land, and is typical of many other 19th century developments around railways, with its associated station building, goods yard, hotel and workers houses. The Victorian cemetery contributes to the planned 19th century character of the zone. Some 20th century industry has developed adjacent to the station which erodes this 19th century flavour, but also continues the industrial function of the area. Cohesiveness of the area increases its significance, and robustness is affected by development pressures and erosion of historic industrial features to accommodate 20th century use.</p>

Overall sensitivity assessment

Zone 6: Wymondham station	HIGH-MEDIUM
----------------------------------	--------------------

Study Area: 3

HETHERSETT-EASTON

Overview

The growth areas proposed in the area between Hethersett and Easton sit within the national landscape character area 84: Mid Norfolk, an area of extensive sand and gravel soils, and is characterised by remnant medieval 'Ancient Countryside', with a patchwork field system, sporadically rationalised.

'Ancient Countryside' is characterised by settlements consisting of isolated farmsteads, hall/church complexes, and common-edge or roadside strings of houses forming 'hamlets', all linked by tracks, which survive as footpaths, tracks, lanes and roads in the current landscape. Within this dispersed settlement pattern are larger settlements which act as markets and service centres.

The NLC area is predominantly arable with variable field sizes, relatively well wooded, often related to the large number of small to medium sized 18th century estates; but with little ancient woodland; and dispersed villages and isolated farmsteads within a complex minor road system, and a cohesive 17th/18th century vernacular architecture.

The land between Hethersett and Easton marks a transition between the urban influence of Norwich and its suburbs, and the rural hinterland. South-west of the city a number of landscaped parks and associated halls show that this was a favoured area for the city's wealthy and influential to build convenient country residences. Settlement in the study area has been influenced by two major routes – the old London Road to the south, and the Swaffham Road to the north.

Running broadly west-east through this area, the River Yare produces another settlement pattern of hamlets which developed around river crossings, with associated buildings such as bridges and mills, and pastoral river meadows.

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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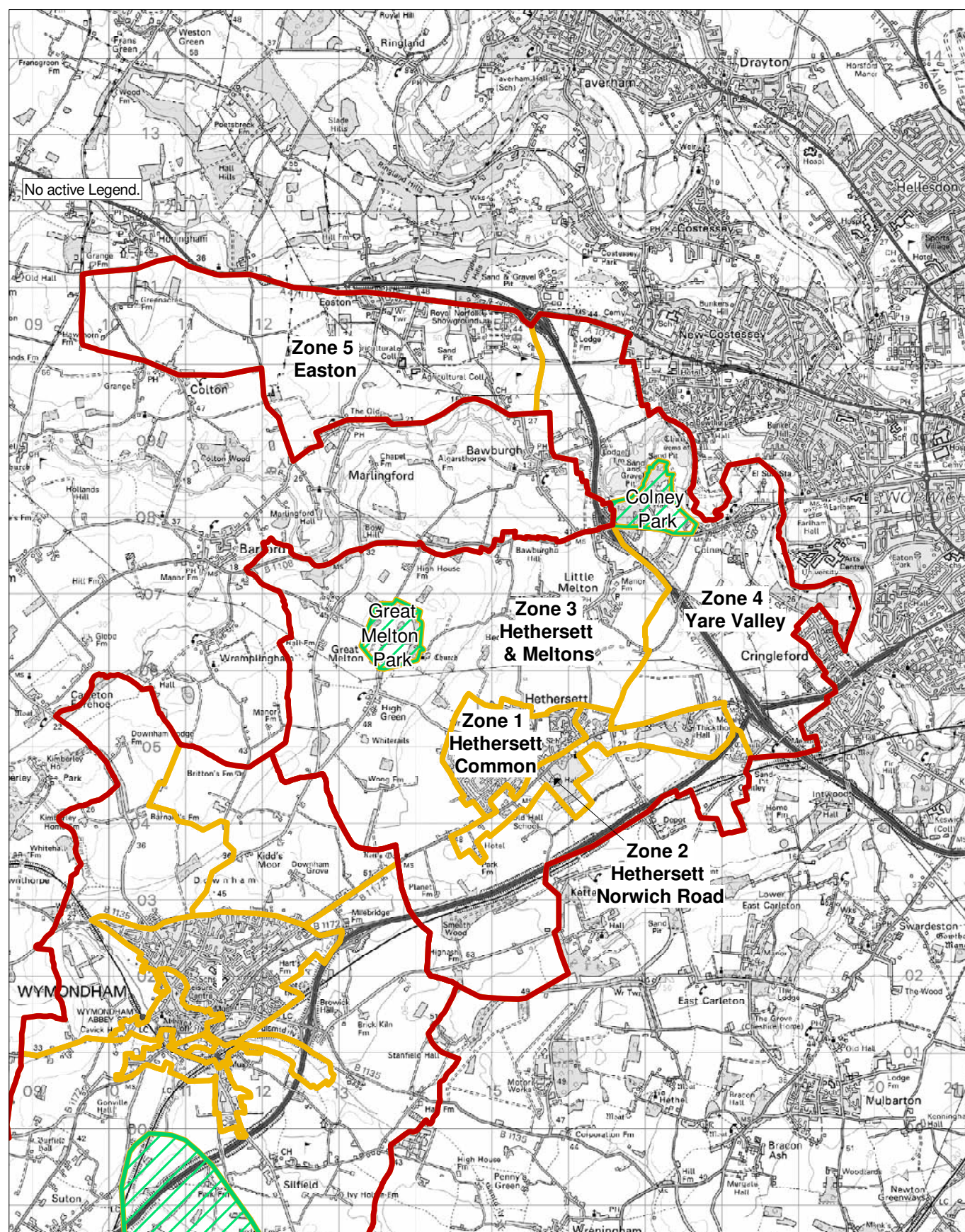
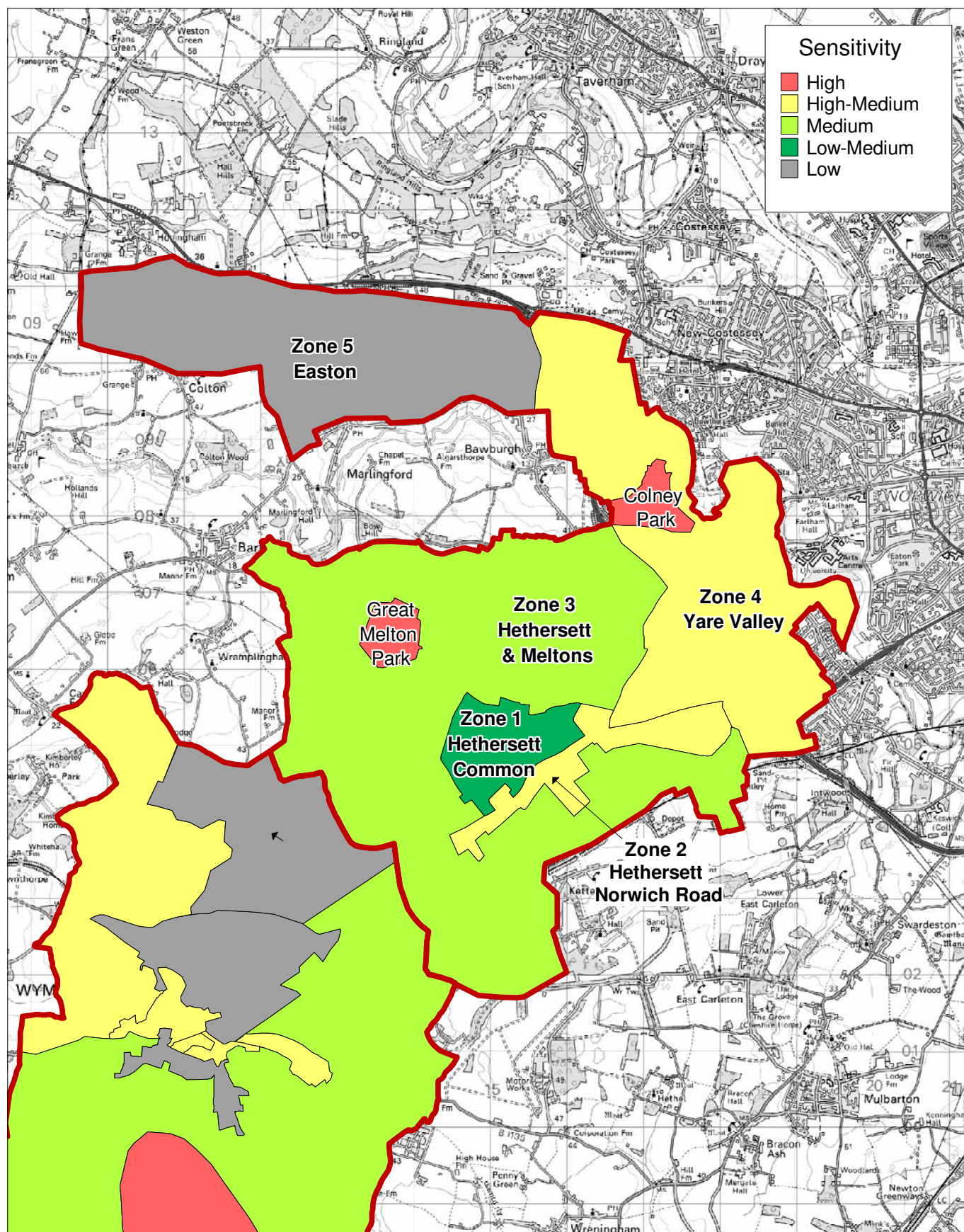


Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 3: Hethersett-Easton

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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Zone: 1 Hethersett Common

LCA cross reference

D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 32, 33

Characteristics summary

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greens and commons• boundary loss• 16th/17th century vernacular buildings |
|---|

Qualitative summary

The former common-edge settlement at Hethersett has been almost entirely eroded by extensive 20 th century development, and there is virtually no evidence left of the pre-20 th century landscape. This affects significance; and the extent of erosion reduces potential future vulnerability.
--

Overall sensitivity assessment

1 Hethersett common	LOW-MEDIUM
----------------------------	-------------------

Zone: 2 Hethersett Norwich Road
--

LCA cross reference

C1 Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 30, 31, 33

Characteristics summary

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Church/hall settlement• Country houses and parks• Major road |
|--|

Qualitative summary

This zone has a medieval church/hall settlement at its core, but in the post-medieval period developed as a residential suburb to Norwich along the main road. This settlement pattern is largely preserved, though 20 th century development has eroded the spaces between historic buildings on the north side of the road, reducing its robustness.

Overall sensitivity assessment

Zone 2: Hethersett Norwich Road	HIGH-MEDIUM
--	--------------------

Zone: 3 Hethersett & Meltons

LCA cross reference

C1 Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 25, 26, 30, 33, 34, 35

Characteristics summary

- Greens and commons
- Boundary loss
- Isolated farmsteads
- 16th/17th century vernacular buildings
- historic park

Qualitative summary

The zone represents a much fragmented area of the 'Ancient Countryside' landscape type. Former commons have all been enclosed and turned to arable, and 20th century field amalgamation has eroded earlier field boundaries. Former common-edge settlements are difficult to recognise, particularly where modern in-fill has eroded the relationship of these buildings to each other, as in Little Melton. Several of those historic houses which have survived have been much altered. These factors reduce significance; and the extent of erosion reduces future potential vulnerability. Gt Melton Park is a significant and cohesive feature and is therefore judged separately.

Overall sensitivity assessment

Hethersett & Meltons
(Great Melton Park)

MEDIUM
HIGH-MEDIUM

Zone: 4 Yare Valley**LCA cross reference**

C1 Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland
F1 Yare Valley Urban Fringe

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 19, 20, 21, 23

Characteristics summary

- Church/hall settlement
- Dispersed farmsteads
- Limited trackway system and crossings
- Anciently enclosed river meadow
- 18-19th century plantations
- Historic park

Qualitative summary

This zone is characterised by lack of substantial settlement, due to its proximity to the river. Evidence of prehistoric activity is strong, though visible evidence in the landscape is sparse. The later settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads has largely survived. River meadows were anciently enclosed, and away from the river bottom other land was enclosed early and turned over to arable. Earlier field boundaries are more eroded in Bawburgh and Hethersett than Colney and Cringleford. Significance is affected by erosion in some areas of pre-20th century features. The area is vulnerable to further erosion from housing development which affects robustness. Colney Park is a significant feature in the landscape, and is shown separately, though the sensitivity assessment has the same result as the wider zone.

Overall sensitivity assessment

Yare Valley (Colney Park)	HIGH-MEDIUM HIGH-MEDIUM)
------------------------------	-----------------------------

Zone: 5 Easton**LCA cross reference**

G1 Easton Fringe Farmland

Archaeological character zones cross-reference

ACZ 17, 18, 23

Characteristics summary

- Greens and commons
- boundary loss
- Isolated farmsteads
- 16th/17th century vernacular buildings
- Important road

Qualitative summary

Though this area once conformed to the 'Ancient' countryside settlement pattern, it was eroded at an early stage, and its current character is strongly 20th century. The lack of time-depth affects significance, and the extent of erosion reduces potential for future erosion, making robustness high.

Overall sensitivity assessment

5 Easton	LOW
-----------------	------------

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Norfolk County Council May 2009



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