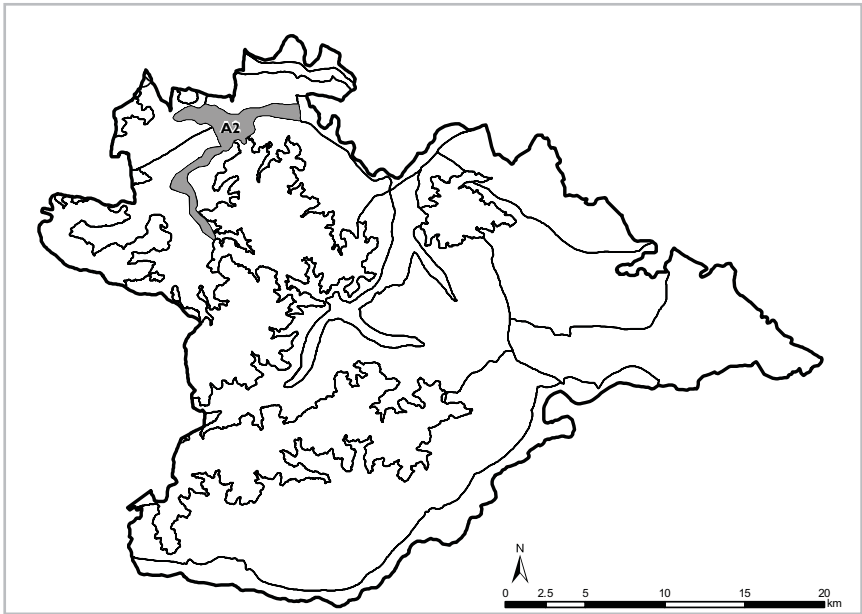
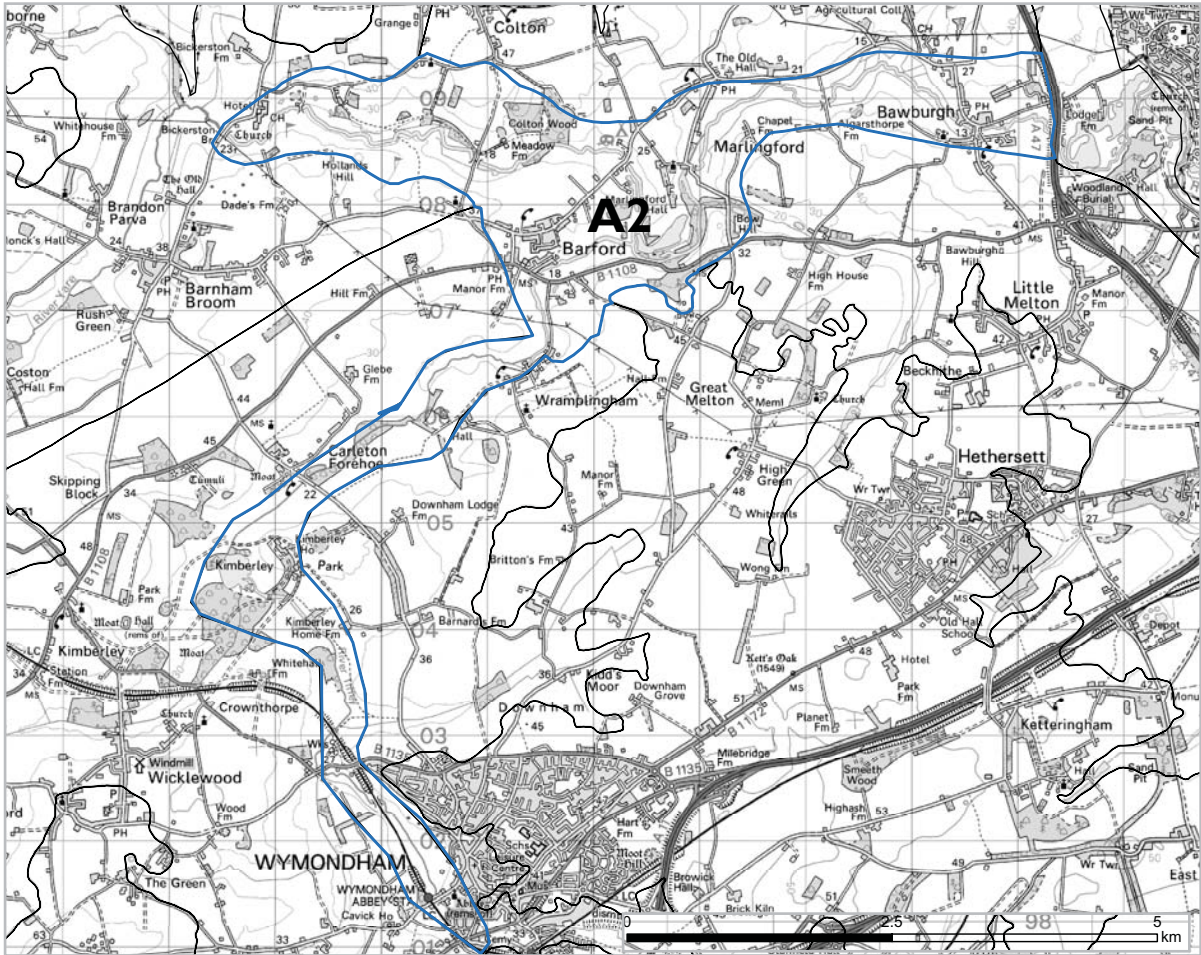


Character Area: A2
Yare/ Tiffey Rural River Valley



Location within South Norfolk District



Extent of the Yare/ Tiffey Rural River Valley Character Area



Typical paddocks and rough-grazing set against the well-vegetated bankside of the River Tiffey on the outskirts of Wymondham



Rural lanes



View of Wymondham Abbey across the Tiffey Valley



Small vernacular settlements are found clustered around old bridging points for example at Wramplingham

6. A2: YARE/TIFFEY RURAL RIVER VALLEY

DESCRIPTION

- 6.1. **Location and Boundaries:** The Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valley is found to the southwest of Norwich. A large proportion of this character area is within the Norwich Policy Area. The area is defined by the valley landform of the River Yare and its tributary the River Tiffey and falls below 30m AOD. The Norwich Southern Bypass defines the boundary of this character area where it crosses the River Yare, east of Norwich.
- 6.2. The character of the **Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valley** is illustrated in **Figure A2**.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Narrow shallow valley-form** widening into a broad shallow valley at the confluence of the Rivers Yare and Tiffey near Barford. The valley sides gently undulate creating a sense of defined openness.
- **Meandering small rivers, increasing in size where the Tiffey joins the Yare, intermittently visible across the valley floor** or from river crossings, but frequently screened by dense bankside vegetation.
- **Presence of distinct areas of vegetation of valley floor with regular avenues of poplars** flanking drainage ditches, particularly within the Yare Valley.
- **Presence of attractive historic bridges** over the river, mostly constructed of brick, some of which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- **Important buildings present** including Wymondham Abbey plus churches and mills forming landmark features.
- **Pastoral valley floor with areas of damp hummocky pastureland** supporting sheep grazing with occasional paddocks and arable valley sides.
- **Patchwork of small valleyside woodland blocks** and wooded bankside creating a lush and green ambience which is accentuated by the variety of species and consequent variety of shades of green.
- **Tranquil rural character with strong visual diversity** created by the contrast between open areas and more wooded intimate areas.
- **Distinct small attractive villages with strong vernacular qualities clustered around river crossings on the valley floor.** Sparse farmsteads and isolated buildings are scattered across the valley sides.
- **Network of peaceful small rural roads** which meander across the valley with sunken lanes providing access to valleyside dwellings.
- **Important internal views including the view to Wymondham Abbey.** The area is also highly visible from the Norwich Southern Bypass.

Geology and Soils

- 6.3. The Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valley is a unit of considerable visual diversity with a wide and shallow valley form, created by the merging of two narrower valley-forms. The area principally comprises alluvial deposits on the well-defined floodplain and glacial till upon the valley sides. The channel of the Rivers Yare and Tiffey are fairly narrow but do register as 'rivers' where they are visible. These follow gentle meanders until the Tiffey joins the Yare near to Barford, at which point the meanders become more pronounced and the Yare becomes considerably larger.

Landform, Topography, Scale and Enclosure

- 6.4. The agricultural grade is low, with humic sandy-gley soils of Grade 4 on the flood-prone valley floor and Grade 3 argillic brown earths on the valley sides. Correspondingly, the valley floor is in pastoral use with sheep grazing particularly evident. Rough grazing paddocks with their associated post and wire fences, are particularly characteristic of the Tiffey valley. On the valley sides there are areas of arable use – predominantly cereals.
- 6.5. The valley is mostly open in character with medium to distant internal views but with few views from or to surrounding landscapes. The Norwich Southern Bypass defines the eastern boundary of the character area and at this point the landscape becomes more open with clear views from and to the Bypass. The road itself introduces considerable noise and movement into the landscape.

Land Cover and Biodiversity

- 6.6. There are pockets of small valley-side woods, predominantly deciduous. The variety of species within and between woodlands creates a patchwork of silver and green foliage in spring and summer. These woodlands include semi-natural woodlands of ancient origin, for example Colton Wood. The valley floor also includes woodland areas, including the riverbanks. The character of the vegetation varies from dense deciduous woodland to distinctive regular lines of poplars beside the water-filled ditches and, in settled areas, managed aquatic bankside vegetation including reeds and flag irises. The quality and condition of the hedgerow is variable with a number of intact and species-rich hedgerows occurring beside the rural lanes. Overall the landscape lacks a strong linked hedgerow network and remnant hedgerow trees are not characteristic. Surprisingly, in general this area has low ecological diversity and there are no wetland designations of national importance.

Historic Character

- 6.7. The area has a rich history with a number of visible historic sites. Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the area include Bawburgh Bridge and two houses nearby. However, the principal SAM of the area is Wymondham Abbey, detached from the market town of the same name, and located within the Tiffey Valley at the southern extremity of this character area. The Priory was founded by William d'Albini in 1107 and became the Benedictine Wymondham Abbey in 1448. There are excellent views to the Abbey from Wymondham across the rural valley.
- 6.8. Parkland is notably absent throughout most of the character area. The most significant area is at Kimberley Hall, a large brick hall with its associated parkland

designed by Capability Brown. The parkland transverses the River Tiffey and includes a large lake made by damming the river. The landscape at Kimberley Hall is listed Grade II* by English Heritage, which is the highest graded parkland in the district.

Settlement and Built Character

- 6.9. The valleys have a distinct picturesque settlement character of small villages clustered at or close to the river crossing point (generally an attractive hump-backed bridge) at regular intervals. Elsewhere there are a number of scattered small farmsteads. These are connected by a network of winding sunken lanes with attractive black on white fingersigns. The principal villages contained in this character area are Bawburgh, Marlingford, Barford and Wrampingham. These are all charming villages containing a core of attractive buildings with a strong vernacular character including brick and flint buildings, stepped gable ends, round towered churches including the round towered church at Bawburgh, and a weather-boarded watermill at Marlingford.

EVALUATION

Significant Landscape Assets

National/International

- Some ancient woodland present (Colton Wood) but no national biodiversity designations.
- A number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments including Wymondham Abbey, an impressive landmark in the District, and Bawburgh Bridge.
- Presence of round-towered churches – Bawburgh.
- Presence of isolated churches.

District/County

- Strong vernacular character with stepped gables (as opposed to Dutch/Shaped).
- Presence of historic parkland, in particular English Heritage listed Grade II* Kimberley Hall, the most important parkland in South Norfolk.
- Attractive wooded patchwork and wooded river margins including Colton Woods.
- Distinctive valley landform.
- Waterways visible within the landscape - Rivers Yare and Tiffey.
- Watermills present - Marlingford Mill.

Local

- Pastoral Farmland.

- Important cross-valley views to Wymondham Abbey.
- Areas of poplar-lined ditches characteristic of Yare valley.
- Wide grass verges alongside roads.
- Good hedgerow network.
- Mature hedgerow trees.
- Bridges rather than fords - Bawburgh Bridge.
- Sunken lanes.
- Waterbodies including large lake at Kimberley Hall.
- Tiffey Valley acts as a strategic break between settled areas and helps to contain the growth of Wymondham.

Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities

6.10. The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities identified for the Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valley Character Area are:

- the rural 'undeveloped' character of the valley providing the context for the existing villages at fording points;
- the vulnerability of the landscape to loss of openness and degradation, particularly in the highly-visible Bawburgh area where the Norwich Southern Bypass passes at the periphery of the area;
- visual sensitivities of valley crests to change/development;
- the importance of retaining the rural character, for example by avoiding urbanising influences upon the rural lanes such as kerbing, replacement of the black and white finger signs with standard highways signage or other small scale incremental changes which would erode the quality of the landscape;
- sensitivity to loss of the pervading vernacular character and charm of the settlements through unsympathetic infill or edge-of-settlement expansion;
- loss of attractive bankside vegetation or woodland from the valley sides;
- the particular vulnerability of the Tiffey Valley to Wymondham-centred growth, particularly the need to avoid visual intrusion upon Wymondham Abbey or its setting;
- development associated with the Norwich Southern Bypass.

Landscape Strategy

6.11. **The strategy for the Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valley character area is to conserve the peaceful, rural quality of the valley landscape with its small**

rural settlements and important historic and archaeological features.
Landscape enhancement opportunities should focus on:

- hedgerow restoration, particularly to enhance the winding remote quality of the sunken (and other) rural lanes;
- targeted landscape improvements focussed on the Bawburgh area that seek to retain positive views from the bypass into the area whilst reducing the adverse impacts the bypass has on the rural character in the north/east of the area for example by selective planting;
- river management to repair and encourage the development of diverse wetland ecosystems;
- woodland management and (limited) creation on the valley sides.

Development Considerations

6.12. Any development in the area should respect the character of the Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valley and should maintain the rural vernacular quality of the existing settlements. In particular the following should be considered:

- respect the existing development pattern with settlement clustered around fording points as at Bawburgh, or focussed at the base of the valley sides as at Marlingford or Wrampingham;
- maintain the sense of separation and strong rural character between settlements;
- maintain the openness of the valley floor and small scale of existing developments. The area is particularly vulnerable to intrusion by infrastructure such as pylons or other vertical elements, either within or visible from the area;
- protect the quality of long-range views into the valley from the Norwich Southern Bypass and from the surrounding Tributary Valley Farmland and, in particular, protect the skyline and crest of the upper slope;
- consider the transport requirements of any development proposal and the potential impact of any required upgrade upon the rural character of the road network;
- respect the vernacular quality of the villages as a whole and individual buildings and ensure new buildings respect this characteristic.

