

# BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



## Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

September 2013





## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

### I Explanatory Background

- i.i The enclosed Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) relates to the Landscape Character Assessment Review commissioned to Chris Blandford Associates (May 2008) by Broadland District Council in October 2007. The Study covers the District excluding the Broads Authority Executive Area, for which the Broads Authority are the local planning authority, and the more built up parts of the district close to Norwich because of their urban nature. Furthermore, it updates the previous Landscape Character Assessment (1999) in accordance with the current guidance. Though, the previous LCA will continue to provide informal guidance on Areas of Landscape Value under Local Plan Policy ENV 8. The Local Plan Policies are 'saved' until they are superseded by the proposed Local Plan.
- i.ii The LCA SPD is supplementary to **Policy 1 Addressing Climate Change and Protecting Environmental Assets** in the Joint Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) which forms part of Broadland's emerging Local Plan. The LCA SPD will be material consideration in determining planning applications.
- i.iii The LCA draft (SPD) was subject to a six week consultation between November – December 2011 along with the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening confirming no SA/SEA for LCA (SPD) was required by environmental bodies. Changes made to the LCA (SPD) reflect comment received, policy updates and factual changes. These changes are highlighted in the text as well as, deleted section struck through. More specifically, updates include current policy and guidance, current records of Ancient Woodland including a revised Figure 2.3 Nature Conservation Designations map. For future updates refer to the Natural England website.

**BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Landscape Character Assessment SPD is supplementary to the Joint Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) Policy - 1 Addressing Climate Change and Protecting Environmental Assets and as such forms part of Broadland's emerging Local Plan. This SPD relates to, and provides guidance for, the application of relevant development plan policies and other planning guidance in the consideration of development proposals. Furthermore, it is itself a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission.

**Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change and Protecting Environmental Assets – Joint Core Strategy**

To address climate change and promote sustainability, all developments will be located and designed to use resources efficiently.....

....The environmental assets of the area will be protected, maintained, restored and enhanced and the benefits for residents and visitors improved.

.....(extract)

- 1.2 The Joint Core Strategy states (Paragraph 5.4) 'the area has a wealth of environmental assets ranging from international to national status, to those of local importance. These must be safeguarded and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations. These assets include biodiversity (wildlife and habitats), built heritage and wider historic environment, ancient monuments and archaeological assets, geodiversity (geological features), landscape and historic landscape character; as well as some general aspects such as the countryside and rural character, the setting of Norwich, towns and villages and the Broads'.
- 1.3 Furthermore, although the Joint Core Strategy was subject to a legal

challenge, the section which the LCA SPD is supplementary to remains adopted and unaffected.

## **2. Policy Background**

2.1 The main planning policy background and planning guidance at national, and local level are set out below:

### **2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) , 2012**

(section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. In addition, under Plan-making section paragraph 170 states 'where appropriate, landscape character assessment should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character, and for areas where there are major expansion options assessment of landscape sensitivity'.

### **2.3 Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment**

(paragraph 6.40) makes reference to suitable approaches to the identification of the components and character of the wider historic landscape developed by the Countryside Commission (see its Landscape Assessment Guidance' .

### **2.4 Joint Core Strategy (2011)**

The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk was adopted in March 2011. The JCS sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the area, including strategic policies for steering and shaping development. It identifies broad locations for new housing and employment growth and changes to transport infrastructure and other supporting community facilities as well as, defining areas where development should be limited. It helps deliver other services and related strategies.

The JCS received a legal challenge on parts of the text, and associated maps and diagrams, these were remitted by High Court Order. However, sections relevant to the LCA (SPD) remain adopted and unaffected.

### **2.5 Broadland Local Plan (Replacement) 2006**

The Broadland District Local Plan (Replacement) adopted in 2006 remains saved and forms part of Broadland's local development plan although some of the policies have been superseded by the JCS. It is intended that the Local Plan (2006) will be replaced by the JCS along with the emerging Site Allocations, (DPD), Development Management (DPD) and North East Growth Triangle Area Action Plan (AAP).

## **3. Assessment**

- 3.1 As part of the Landscape Character Assessment SPD the LCA Review provides an up-to-date integrated assessment of the landscape character of the district in accordance with the current guidance and best practice. The study firstly assesses the landscape character of the district, considering not only scenic and visual characteristics but also the physical, historical influences that have shaped the landscape. A total of six Landscape Character Types are defined, within the six generic landscape types, and sixteen Landscape Character Areas within the district. (See figure 3.5 and sections 3.2.9 and section 3.0 and figures 6 to 30). For each area issues of landform and geology, landscape and land use, settlements and buildings, landscape and visual character and historic land use character are discussed. The Broads Area and the built up areas of the Norwich fringe parishes were excluded from the assessment and this SPD does not apply to them. Rural settlements have been regarded as being part of the landscape character area within which they lie.

#### **4. Consultations**

- 4.1 Consultations on draft LCA (SPD) include two pre-consultation exercises with internal staff, key stakeholder organisations i.e. Statutory Bodies and Interest Bodies as well as with Town and Parish Councils in early December 2007 and March 2008. As part of the process, Broadland District Council consulted with the Tree Wardens on the Draft Landscape Typology. Comments made were used to inform the draft LCA (SPD) which was subject to a further public consultation from 7 November to 19 December 2011. The responses received were considered and where appropriate reflected in changes to the LCA SPD.
- 4.2 The Council also consulted the environmental statutory bodies in July 2011 with regards to an SA/SEA Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Screening for the draft LCA SPD confirming no SA/SEA required as the parent Policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy had been subject to both a Sustainability Appraisal Report and Appropriate Assessment as required by the European and National legislation.

#### **5. Application to Development Proposals**

- 5.1 Regard will be had to the SPD in considering development proposals. Proposals will be considered for how well they conform to the distinctive character of an area, and whether they will add to or detract from this. In addition, Management Strategies and Objectives are set for each landscape area as well as Landscape Planning Guidelines for informing land use planning decisions.



**Broadland District Council**

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**BROADLAND DISTRICT  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**



**UPDATED September 2013**

**May 2008**

***CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES***

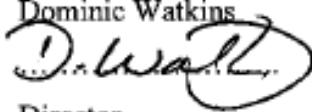
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*Environment   Landscape   Planning*

## Broadland District Council

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# BROADLAND DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Approved by: Dominic Watkins  
Signed:   
Position: Director  
Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2008

**UPDATED September 2013**

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2008

**May 2008**

**CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES**

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## PREFACE

This Technical Study was commissioned by Broadland District Council. The Study provides a review of the existing Landscape Assessment for Broadland District, undertaken in 1999<sup>1</sup>, and an update in accordance with current published guidance (2002). It provides a baseline inventory of variations in landscape character across the District, and outlines guidance for conserving, enhancing, and/or restoring locally distinctive landscape characteristics. The need to protect and enhance landscape character is recognised by Government planning policy on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. To ensure that full account is given to landscape character in planning decisions, this Study is commended to the Council for use as an evidence base for informing the preparation of the Local Development Framework and in development control.

We are grateful for the advice and guidance provided by the Steering Group, namely:

- Isabel Whitehead – Senior Policy Officer, Broadland District Council,
- John Walchester – Senior Policy Officer, Broadland District Council,
- Barbara Hornbrook – Conservation Manager, Broadland District Council.

In addition, we appreciate the help of individuals from other organisations who willingly assisted in the provision of data and information for the Study. We would also like to acknowledge the representatives of organisations who attended the stakeholder consultation workshops held during the course of the Study (see Appendix A for details). The information gained from these stakeholders provided an important input to the Study.

The Consultant team comprised:

- Dominic Watkins
- Emma Clarke
- Flora Wehl
- Alison MacDonald
- Chloé Cova
- Sarah De Vos

*Chris Blandford Associates*  
*March 2008*

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<sup>1</sup> Broadland District Landscape Assessment and Review of Areas of Important Landscape Quality: Final Report, June 1999, Chris Blandford Associates

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

In October 2007, Broadland District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment of the District (excluding the Broads Authority Area).

The aim of the Study is to provide an up to date integrated assessment of the landscape character of the District, reviewing the existing landscape character assessment, in accordance with current guidance and best practice. This will serve as a baseline inventory to enable a better understanding of Broadland's landscapes for monitoring change. The Landscape Character Assessment will be used as a technical evidence base to inform the Local Development Framework currently being prepared by the Council, and guide development control decisions.

### **Methodology**

The overall approach to the Study is based on Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002), the latest published guidance, and takes into account current best practice. Landscape Character Assessment addresses both the relatively objective process of landscape characterisation, which involves identifying, mapping, classifying and describing 'landscape character', and the more subjective process of evaluating landscape character to inform planning and land management decisions.

In summary, the main stages involved in the study process were:

- Information Scoping
- Desk-Study Research
- Field Survey
- Characterisation
- Evaluation
- Preparation of the Study Report

Consultation with key stakeholder organisations via a stakeholder workshop was an important and integral element of the Study. The purpose of the stakeholder consultation was to strengthen the evidence base by gathering opinions about landscape character from the key stakeholders, and to promote the value of the Study as a tool for informing planning and land management decisions in rural areas.

### **Structure of the Report**

*Section 1.0* sets out the context for the Study. It explains the background to the Study, its aims and objectives, and highlights the importance of landscape character. It also describes the planning policy framework for the Study, and outlines the approach and process behind the assessment methodology.

*Section 2.0* provides an overview of the District. It describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, considers past and current perceptions of the landscape and identifies the key forces for change affecting landscape character today.

*Section 3.0* provides an overview of landscape character across the District as a whole within the national and county context, and provides detailed 'profiles' of the 6 Landscape Character Types and 16 Landscape Character Areas identified by the assessment. The profiles describe the character of each Landscape Character Unit, and set out management strategies, objectives and guidelines for informing environmental land management initiatives and land use planning decisions.

*Section 4.0* sets out the main conclusions of the Study, and provides recommendations to the Council for its consideration and action as appropriate.

### **Informing Judgements**

Judgements about the acceptability, or otherwise, of development and/ or land management proposals should take account of:

- (i) The description and guidance for the relevant Landscape Character Type(s) related to the proposals in landscape character terms; and
- (ii) The description and guidance for the relevant Landscape Character Area(s) related to the proposal.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 In October 2007 Broadland District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment of the District.
- 1.1.2 Broadland District is predominantly rural, covering an area of 213 square miles to the north of the City of Norwich, Norfolk. It embraces large areas of low lying arable land, and to a lesser extent, pasture farmland. It also contains numerous woodlands and plantations along the areas of historic parkland. For the most part, the boundaries of the District are roughly defined by the river valleys of the Bure, Wensum and Yare. In the west, the boundary follows the edge of and the elevated Till Plateau. The eastern edges of the District are within the executive areas area of the Broads Authority, which is the local planning authority for the Broads Authority Area. For the purposes of this Study, however, the landscape within this area has been excluded from the Study Area.
- 1.1.3 An existing Landscape Assessment was produced for the District in 1999, excluding the Broads Authority Executive Area and the main built up areas. The main purpose of the Study was to evaluate the quality of the landscape to inform a review of the existing boundaries of Areas of Important Landscape Quality designated in the then current Local Plan. This Study seeks to update the 1999 assessment in line with current guidance and best practice.

### **1.2 Study Aims and Objectives**

- 1.2.1 The main aim of the Study is to provide an up to date integrated assessment of the landscape character of the District, reviewing the existing landscape character assessment, in accordance with current guidance and best practice. The Study was undertaken at 1:25,000 scale and will serve as a baseline of environmental information to enable a better understanding of Broadland's landscapes.
- 1.2.2 The Study also aims to provide a 'tool kit' of integrated guidance for use as part of the development management process in the consideration of impacts and potential measures for mitigation and development proposals.
- 1.2.3. The key objectives of the Study are to:
- Undertake a systematic review and update of the District's existing Landscape Character Assessment (completed in 1999<sup>2</sup>) to identify Landscape Character Types and revise Landscape Character Areas;
  - Provide a comprehensive description and evaluation of the landscape character units identified within the District, integrating field survey information on visual character with historic landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity (including ecological network mapping information).

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<sup>2</sup> Broadland District Landscape Assessment and Review of Areas of Important Landscape Quality: Final Report, June 1999, Chris Blandford Associates

- Engage key stakeholders in the process to gather views on landscape character issues and raise awareness of the project.

1.2.4 The area of Study characterised by this assessment includes all of the rural area up to and including the urban edge of the main settlements. It excludes landscapes within the Broads Authority Area.

### 1.3 The Importance of Landscape Character

1.3.1 The UK Government signed the European Landscape Convention<sup>3</sup> on 24 February 2006. The Convention aims to encourage public authorities within member states to adopt exemplary and long lasting policies and measures for the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, both outstanding and ordinary, that determine the quality of people's living environment.

1.3.2 The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as:

*'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'*

1.3.3 The term landscape is typically synonymous with the countryside; however, landscape is everywhere and may comprise rural landscapes, urban landscapes or townscape, urban fringe landscapes, coastal landscapes or seascapes, etc.

1.3.4 In England and Scotland, Landscape Character Assessment<sup>4</sup> is a tool that allows landscape character to be understood, explained and described in a transparent and robust way. It does this by mapping and describing the variations in physical, natural and cultural attributes and experiential characteristics that make one area distinctive from another at a range of spatial scales. Landscape Character Assessment also recognises how landscapes have changed over time, and acknowledges the changing influences of human activities and the impacts of economic development.

1.3.5 The overall aim of landscape planning, design and management should be to achieve *sustainable landscapes* that are as visually, biodiverse and culturally rich as possible to meet society's social, economic and environmental needs. A better understanding of landscapes provided by Landscape Character Assessments – their diversity, character and distinctiveness, evolution, sensitivity to change and their management needs – is essential in helping to work towards this goal.

### 1.4 Planning Policy Framework

1.4.1 National Planning Policy relating to landscape character is contained below: in [PPS1<sup>5</sup>](#) and [PPS7<sup>6</sup>](#).

<sup>3</sup> The European Landscape Convention opened for signature in Florence on 20 October 2000. Jim Knight, Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity announced the UK signing of the European Landscape Convention on 24 February 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> [Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development \(ODPM, 2005\)](#).

## **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012**

1.4.2 (section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. In addition, under Plan-making section paragraph 170 states 'where appropriate, landscape character assessment should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character, and for areas where there are major expansion options assessment of landscape sensitivity'.

1.4.3 **Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment** (paragraph 6.40) makes reference to suitable approaches to the identification of the components and character of the wider historic landscape developed by the Countryside Commission (see its Landscape Assessment Guidance'.

### ***Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development***

~~1.4.2 PPS1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It states that one of the Government's objectives for the planning system is that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable urban and rural development by protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside (para 5). In its key principles, PPS1 states that 'a spatial planning approach should be at the heart of planning for sustainable development' (para 13.iii) and 'design which fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted' (para 13.iv). When preparing development plans 'planning authorities should seek to enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character' (para 27). PPS1 also requires new design to be integrated into the existing urban form and natural and built environments (para 35).~~

### ***Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas***

~~1.4.3 Landscape Character Assessment, along with Village or Town Design Statements and Village or Parish Plans, is recommended by PPS7 as a tool to assist Local Authorities in the preparation of policies and guidance that encourages good quality design throughout rural areas (para 13). Landscape Character Assessment is also recommended by PPS7 as a tool for creating carefully drafted, criteria-based policies in Local Development Documents to protect valued landscapes outside nationally designated areas without the need for rigid local designations, which may restrict sustainable development and the economic vitality of rural areas. PPS7 advises that local landscape designations should only be maintained or, exceptionally, extended where it can be clearly shown that criteria-based policies cannot provide the necessary protection (paras 24 and 25).~~

### ***The East of England Plan***

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<sup>6</sup> ~~Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (ODPM, 2004).~~

1.4.4 The Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England was published by the Regional Assembly for consultation in December 2004<sup>7</sup>. An Examination in Public (EIP) into the draft RSS was held between November 2005 and March 2006. The EIP Panel Report was published in June 2006, which included recommended changes to the draft RSS. Further proposed changes were published in March 2007 and the Final RSS is due to be published early in 2008. The Draft RSS contains a range of policies requiring action by local planning authorities.

1.4.5 The Draft RSS is based on the principles of sustainable development. It specifically identifies protection of protected landscapes/designated areas and application of landscape character as a key consideration in the spatial development of the region. Taking into account the recommended changes of the Secretary of State, the specific relevant policy is *Draft RSS Policy ENV2—Landscape Character*:

- *'Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and programmes and proposals will, in accordance with statutory requirements, afford the highest status of protection to the East of England's nationally designated landscapes — the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, the Chilterns, Norfolk Coast, Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast and Heath Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)s and the North Norfolk and Suffolk Heritage Coasts. Within the Broads priority will be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area, promoting public enjoyment and protecting the interests of navigation. Within the AONB priority over considerations will be given to conserving the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of each area'.*
- *Throughout the East of England planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies, programmes and proposals should recognise, and aim to protect and enhance the, diversity and local distinctiveness of the nationally defined countryside character areas, by:*
  - *developing area-wide strategies, based on landscape character assessments, setting long term goals for landscape change, targeting planning and local management tools and resources to influence that change and giving priority of those areas subject to most growth and change;*
  - *developing criteria-based policies, informed by area-wide strategies and landscape character assessments, to ensure that all development, respects and enhances local landscape character; and*
  - *securing appropriate mitigation measures where avoidance of damage to local landscape character is unavoidable.*

### **Norfolk Structure Plan**

1.4.6 The approved Norfolk Structure Plan<sup>8</sup> was adopted in 1999. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Structure Plan and its policies are saved until 2007 — or until superseded by the published RSS (whichever is sooner).

<sup>7</sup> The East of England Plan: Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (December 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Norfolk Structure Plan, Adopted 1999, Norfolk County Council.

~~1.4.7 The Structure Plan contains three policies related to landscape protection: Policy ENV2 on the character of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Heritage Coast and the Broads; Policy ENV3 on Areas of Important Landscape Quality and Policy ENV4 on the distinctive character of the Norfolk countryside and coast.~~

## Local Planning Context

1.4.8 Broadland District Council has prepared and adopted a Local Plan for the whole of the District to guide development and to protect and enhance the environment, which contains a number of policies concerned with the protection of different aspects of landscape, including in particular:

- ~~• Policy ENV1 – Protection and enhancement of the character of the District~~
- Policy ENV2 – Layout, design and setting of developments
- Policy ENV3 – Maintenance of Landscaped Areas
- Policy ENV5 – Protection & Management of ecological & landscape features
- Policy ENV 8 – Areas of Landscape Value
- Policy ENV10 – Restoration & maintenance of Historic Parkland landscapes
- ~~• Policy ENV 24 – New Development & impact on the character of the Broads Area~~

The Joint Core Strategy (adopted) 2011 replaces policies crossed out above with:

- Policy 1 - Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets.
- Policy 2 - Promoting good design
- Policy 18 - The Broads

1.4.9 The Local Plan (2006) will eventually be replaced by Local Development Documents Framework (LDF) under the arrangements set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. ~~The LDF comprises a series of Local Development Documents (LDDs) that will set out proposals for the future development, use and conservation of land and buildings.~~

1.4.10 The main LDDs are the Joint Core Strategy, Development Management Control Policies, Site Specific Allocations, Proposals Map and the Northeast Growth Triangle Area Action Plan. ~~Together with the RSS, These LDDs~~ comprise the statutory Development Plan Documents against which all planning decisions will normally need to be made. It is intended that this Landscape Character Assessment will be used as part of the evidence base of technical studies to inform the LDDs.

## 1.5 Approach and Methodology

1.5.1 The overall approach for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment was based on the latest guidance published by the Countryside Agency<sup>9</sup>, taking into account current best practice. Landscape Character Assessment

<sup>9</sup> Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).



addresses both the relatively objective process of landscape characterisation, which involves identifying, mapping, classifying and describing 'landscape character', and the more subjective process of evaluating landscape character to inform planning and land management decisions.

### ***Integration of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) component***

- 1.5.2 A Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project is currently being undertaken for the whole of Norfolk County. Currently available information from the HLC includes mapping of current land use for the majority of Broadland District. HLC datasets showing relic land use are not yet available, and neither is written descriptions of 'Historic Landscape Types' or 'Historic Landscape Zones' (providing a simplified historic description and judgements about significance and sensitivity).

### ***Integration of Ecological Network Mapping***

- 1.5.3 The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership has prepared an indicative Ecological Network Map of Norfolk<sup>10</sup>, with the aim of protecting and enhancing the wildlife resource through appropriate and sensitive management and habitat creation to restore connectivity/create a series of linked sites. In addition, a District-Ecological Network Map has also been produced for Broadland<sup>11</sup>. The overall aim is to take forward the findings of the County-level Ecological Network Report and apply these at the District Level. Within the District-level report, ecological network priorities were identified for each of the Landscape Character Areas set out within the existing Landscape Character Assessment of Broadland District (1999). These priorities have informed the definition of the Management Strategy and Objectives for each Landscape Character Type within this Study.

### ***Study Process***

- 1.5.4 The following stages of work were undertaken as part of the Study process:

#### ***Information Scoping***

- 1.5.5 The preliminary stage involved the following main tasks:

- Identifying and reviewing existing LCA information covering Broadland, including the existing assessment completed in 1999;
- Obtain information and data for incorporation into the landscape character assessment.
- Desk Study Research

<sup>10</sup> Report of Ecological Network Mapping Project for Norfolk: Presentation of Methodology and Draft Maps for Consultation (July 2006), Reg Land, Norfolk Wildlife Trust for Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership: ([www.norfolkbiodiversity.org](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org))

<sup>11</sup> Broadland District Ecological Network Mapping, R. Land, Norfolk Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Econet Topic Group, January 2007.

1.5.6 This stage involved desk-based research to identify the physical and historical factors that have influenced the shape and use of the landscape. This work drew on a variety of documents and maps (see **Appendix C** for details) that describe the physical geography and cultural history of the District (including geology, soils, hydrology, vegetation and topography). The desk research also considered past and current perceptions of the landscape, and identified the forces for change affecting the character of the District's landscape.

1.5.7 In summary, the desk work involved:

- Mapping of existing character assessments covering the Study Area, to identify draft Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas including:
- National Joint Character Areas: 1:250,000 scale;
- National Typology (known as Landscape Description Units Level 1): 1:250,000 scale;
- County Typology (known as Landscape Description Units Level 2): 1:50,000 scale;
- Local Landscape Character Areas - identified within the existing Broadland Landscape Character Assessment (1999);
- Analysis of existing 1:25,000 scale landscape character assessments for neighbouring local authority areas – including Breckland, North Norfolk, South Norfolk and the Broads Authority;
- Analysis of the Strategic Habitat map (plus descriptions) set out within the Ecological Network Mapping Project to inform draft Landscape Character Types and Areas.

### ***Field Survey***

1.5.8 Field surveys were undertaken during October and November 2007. The aim of the surveys was to undertake a visual analysis of how different features and elements combine to create distinctive patterns in the landscape. The surveys were undertaken from key viewpoints within each draft Landscape Character Type and area by a team of field assessors using a structured checklist. The checklist included:

- Landform
- Rivers/drainage
- Land cover
- Field pattern and field boundaries
- Communication routes
- Settlement form/pattern
- Building styles
- Scale
- Texture
- Enclosure
- Stimuli
- Sense of tranquillity
- Movement
- View types and composition
- Landmarks

- 1.5.9 The survey information (including photographs) was used to (i) inform the descriptions of landscape character and (ii) to test and refine the boundaries of the draft Landscape Character Types and Areas.

### ***Characterisation***

- 1.5.10 The characterisation stage involved the combination of the desk study research and field survey analysis to identify and map generic Landscape Character Types and geographically unique Landscape Character Areas at 1:25,000 scale.
- 1.5.11 For each generic Landscape Character Type, its boundaries were mapped and the following information was recorded:
- Location and Boundaries
  - Key Characteristics
  - Summary of Visual Character
  - Historic Environment Character
  - Ecological Character
  - Key Forces for Change
- 1.5.12 For each unique Landscape Character Area, its boundaries were mapped and a summary of its visual character described.

### ***Evaluation***

- 1.5.13 This stage involved making the following judgements about each Landscape Character Type and Area. For each Landscape Character Type, the following information was included:
- Landscape Condition and Strength of Character;
  - Management Strategy and Objectives (incorporating identified priorities for habitat conservation and enhancement identified by the Ecological Network Mapping Project).
- 1.5.14 For each Landscape Character Area, their inherent landscape sensitivities were evaluated and landscape planning guidelines identified. The sensitivity analysis for each Landscape Character Area, together with the proposed management strategies and objectives for each Landscape Character Type, can be used to inform:
- the identification of spatial development options within the Local Development Framework;
  - Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of Local Development Framework site allocations;
  - the highlighting of landscape issues that may need to be considered in greater detail in relation to development control decisions;
  - the application of criteria-based landscape protection and enhancement policies within the Local Development Framework.

### **Key Stakeholder Consultation**

- 1.5.15 Consultation with key stakeholder organisations was an important and integral element of the Study. The purpose of the stakeholder consultation was to strengthen the evidence base by gathering opinions about landscape character from the key stakeholders, and to promote the value of the Study as a tool for informing planning and land management decisions in rural areas.
- 1.5.16 The consultation involved a workshop to explore stakeholder's views on (i) what gives different places their local identity and distinctive character and (ii) key issues for the protection and landscape enhancement of character in the District (see **Appendix A** for further details). This information was fed into the desk study research, field survey and characterisation stages of the Study to refine and validate the preliminary draft mapping of Landscape Character Types and Areas by the Consultant Team. It was also used to identify issues that needed to be addressed by the management strategies, objectives and guidelines within the evaluation stage. As part of the process, Broadland Tree Wardens were consulted on the Draft Landscape Typology.
- 1.5.17 A second stage of Consultation was undertaken during March 2008. Broadland District Council circulated a questionnaire to Parish Councils, key Statutory Stakeholders and Community Groups. The questionnaire sought views on the Draft Landscape Character Assessment report, the overall approach to the Study and Landscape Character Areas. The responses from this process were collated online and fed into the Final Report.

## **1.6 Structure of the Report**

- 1.6.1 The Study report is structured as follows.

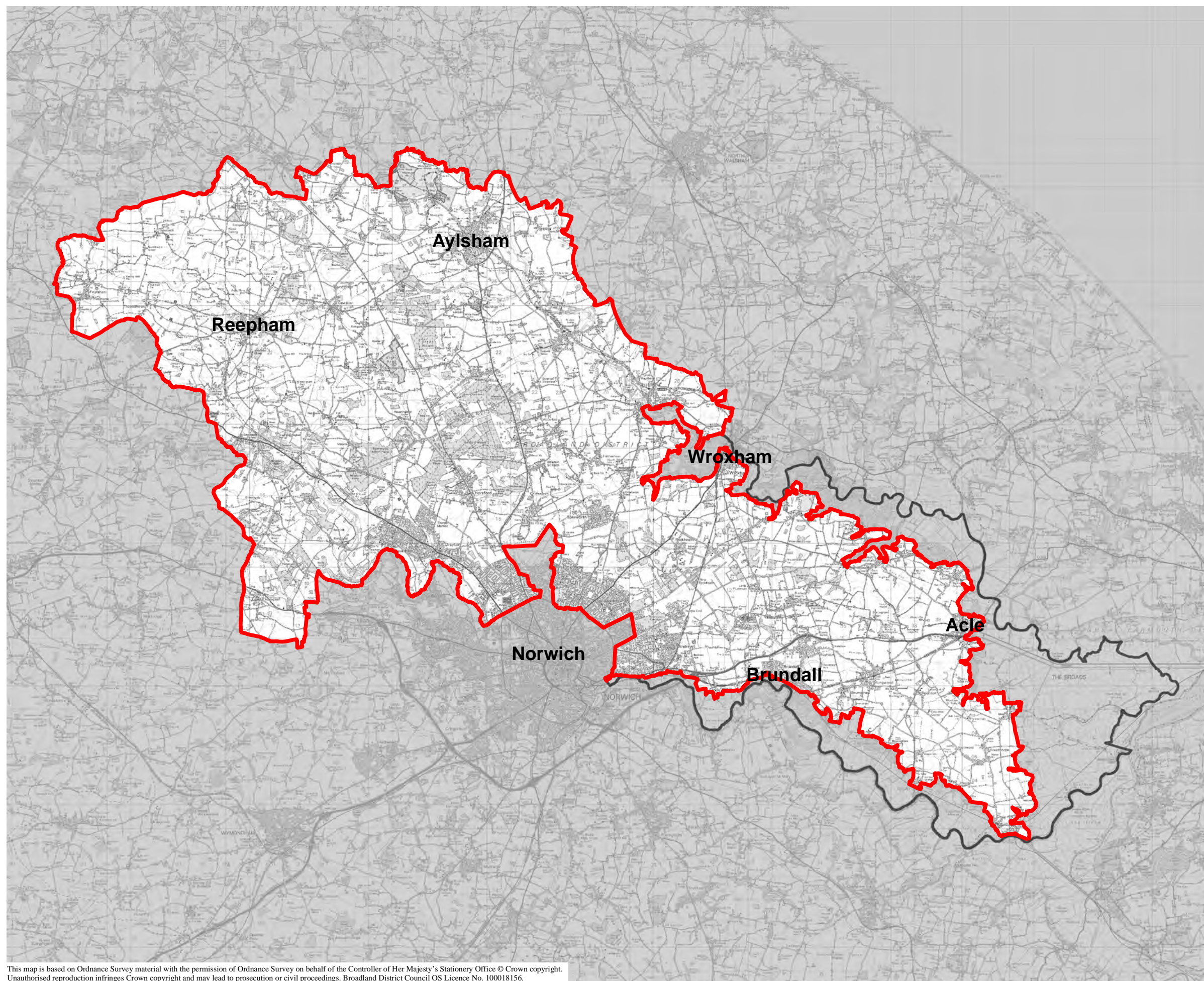
*Section 1.0* sets out the context for the Study. It explains the background to the Study, its aims and objectives, and highlights the importance of landscape character. It also describes the planning policy framework for the Study, and outlines the approach and process behind the assessment methodology.

*Section 2.0* provides an overview of the District. It describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, considers past and current perceptions of the landscape and identifies the key forces for change affecting landscape character today.

*Section 3.0* provides an overview of landscape character across the District as a whole within its national and county context, and provides detailed 'profiles' of the 6 Landscape Character Types and 16 Landscape Character Areas identified by the assessment. The profiles describe the character of each Landscape Character Unit, and set out management strategy and objectives and guidelines for informing environmental land management initiatives and land use planning decisions.

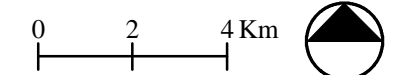
*Section 4.0* sets out the main conclusions of the Study, and provides recommendations to the Council for its consideration and action as appropriate.





# KEY

- Study Area Boundary
- Broads Authority Area



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**CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES**  
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BROADLAND DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2008

**FIGURE 1.1**  
THE STUDY AREA



## **2.0 THE SHAPING OF THE LANDSCAPE**

### **2.1 General**

- 2.1.1 This section provides an overview of the District. It describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, considers past and current perceptions of the landscape and identifies key forces for change affecting landscape character today.

### **2.2 Physical Influences**

- 2.2.1 The landscape within the District has evolved as a result of an interaction of the physical structure of the landscape and the vegetation and land uses that cover it. To understand what makes a place distinctive, it is useful to identify the key physical influences that have shaped the landscape over time.
- 2.2.2 The basic structure of the landscape is fundamentally influenced by its underlying rocks and relief. Geology and the processes of weathering, erosion and deposition influence the shape and form of the landscape and its drainage and soils. In turn, these influence patterns of vegetation and land use.
- 2.2.3 Many have remarked that Norfolk's landscapes are flat, uninspiring and relatively featureless. Although some areas of the county are undeniably flat, across much of this district there is a subtle variety to be found in the gently undulating countryside incised by shallow river valleys.
- 2.2.4 From the low lying land of the broads in the far east of the district, the land rises gently to the west, rising to a height of 60m AOD in the far north west corner of the district around Guestwick (see Figure 2.1). From here, the land continues to rise towards the Cromer Ridge. The river valleys of the Bure and Wensum introduce the most important changes in relief forming shallow convex valleys. Many more subtle variations in topography occur across the district, most reflecting differences in the underlying geology.
- 2.2.5 The solid geological makeup of the area is relatively simple (see Figure 2.2). The District straddles two rock types; chalk to the west of Norwich and crag sediments to the east. The drift geology is more complex and has the greatest influence on the soils, land use and ultimately the character of the area. Across much of the District the solid geology is overlain with glacial tills, sands and gravels resulting in a smooth relatively flat relief.
- 2.2.6 There are few areas where the solid geology is exposed at the surface. Only along the river valley is the underlying crag and chalk exposed, forming gentle valley slopes with a distinctive convex form. A thick blanket of alluvium covers the valley floors of the river and their tributaries.
- 2.2.7 There are three distinct variations to this fairly uniform geological composition. To the north west around Guestwick and to the extreme south east adjacent to the broads, Till deposited as glacial drift on the sand and gravel forms gently domed plateaux. This provides a landform slightly elevated above the surrounding areas, especially in the north west. A small

pocket of land to the south of the Wensum valley around Weston Longville forms part of a much larger Till plateau that extends south west of the district.

- 2.2.8 The predominant soil type across much of the district is brown earth. This is determined by the underlying loam and sand geology. In some areas where the soils become sandier, brown sand develops. Along the river valleys, the alluvium deposited on the valley floor gives rise to peat and gley soils.
- 2.2.9 Exceptions to this pattern of soil distribution are found in two distinct areas of the district. In the north west around Guestwick, stagnoley soils have developed on the Till bed. Directly north of Norwich between the tributaries of the River Bure, a large isolated pocket of sandy gley soils has formed above the sand and gravel geology.

## 2.3 Historical Influences

- 2.3.1 People have transformed the landscape of Broadland into the present day rich tapestry since their emergence in the Palaeolithic.

### ***Palaeolithic to Mesolithic (c.500,000 to c.4,500 BC)***

- 2.3.2. Some of the earliest recorded history of human activity in Britain has been found in Norfolk<sup>12</sup>. Re-deposited flakes and tools recovered from areas such as gravel riverbeds form the main evidence for Palaeolithic to Mesolithic settlement in this area, along with evidence from some large-scale excavations. Small groups of people are likely to have intermittently occupied the area that is now Broadland, for their stone tools have been found in a number of sites.
- 2.3.3 Prior to the Mesolithic, Norfolk was attached to Europe to the east and the north coast lay some 60-70km seaward of its present position. Sea levels have been rising since the end of the last glacial period 10,000 years ago and by 6,500 BC Britain was an island and the Norfolk coastline would have been very similar to today's.
- 2.3.4 During the Mesolithic period, Broadland would have been occupied by small groups of hunters and gatherers, some of which were already present in the late Palaeolithic. This is evidenced by distinctive Mesolithic flintwork and axes being found at several locations in Broadland. Gradually, as the climate ameliorated and coniferous forest spread, the wide-open landscape was lost and hunting and food-gathering methods had to be modified with deer and elk becoming the main source of food for any settlers.

### ***Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age (c.4,500 BC to c.43 AD)***

- 2.3.5 Excavations and surveys in Norfolk show that it is possible that Neolithic communities preferred the light soils and the river valleys of Norfolk compared to the heavy wooded claylands; although the latter are likely to have been exploited for hunting and foraging. Evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation is attested by flintwork, metalwork etc and the

<sup>12</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Norfolk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Norfolk) & [www.broadshawfoundation.com/anglia-man/](http://www.broadshawfoundation.com/anglia-man/)

discovery of burial sites in the Study Area. Examples of the latter include Gargytt Hill, a Neolithic group of barrows near Thorpe St Andrew, and Dead Man's Hill, a Bronze Age barrow in the parish of Cawston. The amount of metalwork found, particularly from the end of the Bronze Age, reveals that Norfolk was an important area for settlement and wealth. Numerous hoards have been recovered from dry-land contexts, some of them large: one from Foulsham included 141 items.

- 2.3.6 The Iron Age was a period of truly dramatic change. Although there was evidently variation in woodland cover and composition across the county, open agricultural landscapes were widespread. Whilst bronze was still in use at the beginning of the Iron Age, communities had iron at their disposal, which allowed farming on harder soil. Proof that people settled in the area during the Iron Age includes, for example, the excavations of an Iron Age rectangular enclosure and associated settlement near Brampton and the discovery of large amounts of Iron Age pottery recovered near Acle (which indicates the site of an Iron age settlement). Evidence from settlements suggests that most people lived in small unenclosed hamlets and villages. Farming was important in this period, but it was not an industry as it later became, its purpose was to sustain the immediate community. Towards the end of the Iron Age, another form of metalwork becomes common in the archaeological record: items of horse equipment, which probably represents a change in the way the land was farmed and managed.

### ***Romano-British and the Anglo- Saxon Periods (c.43 AD to 1066 AD)***

- 2.3.7 The Romans had a major role to play in the changing and continued cultivation of Broadland's landscape. They continued to farm the area, producing cereals. The topography of Roman Norfolk differed greatly from that of today. A large eastern estuary brought open sea as far inland as Acle.
- 2.3.8 Evidence of Roman occupation within the District is considerable. Archaeological finds include coin hoards, pottery, metalworks, buildings, a road and settlement. Before new settlements were to be created, roads had to be built these form one of the lasting Roman legacies in Britain. One such road is that linking Venta Icenorum, Brampton and Denver. Brampton was once the focus of a Roman town and had earthen defences enclosing 6 ha of a 30ha settlement. Industrial evidence in Broadland is apparent, with major pottery industries at Brampton. However, generally evidence points to a Roman landscape mainly cleared and farmed.
- 2.3.9 With the exception of changing sea levels, which resulted in areas which were previously within the estuary becoming inland rivers, Broadland's landscape was little changed after Roman rule collapsed in Britain. Of the subsequent Saxon occupation, there remains some evidence such as 'ham' and 'tun' place-names and archaeological finds, including settlements, cemeteries and metalwork. There is also evidence for Scandinavian/Viking settlement in the place names of certain settlements.

### ***Medieval (1066 to 16<sup>th</sup> century AD)***



- 2.3.10 In 1066 when William Duke of Normandy invaded England, he brought with him technology and designs from the continent. Landed estates, either manorial or monastic, began to influence the landscape and land use. Initially, manorial lands were associated with motte and bailey castles, such as Horsford Castle, and later fortified or moated manor houses, such as the maison forte seen at Great Hautbois. Some of Broadland's estates, still in existence today, would have had their origins in medieval deer-parks and some of the features within their parkland may date from this period, i.e. ancient woodland.
- 2.3.11 During the medieval period, peat cutting within landscape to the east of Broadland District, led to the production of a series of open lakes and the development of the 'Broads'. This activity represented the culmination of a long period of human interaction with this area of low-lying landscape.
- 2.3.12 The medieval period also saw the construction of many churches, which would have formed the tallest buildings in the area and distinct features within the villages close to them<sup>13</sup>. An example is St Peter's Church, near Haveringland, which has retained its 11<sup>th</sup> century round tower. Many medieval parish churches and therefore their villages are mentioned in 1086 and are still in use. It was during the medieval period that monasticism began to take a stronghold in Britain. Some monastic sites were established in Broadland such as the Benedictine Priory of St Faith which was founded around 1105 at a site in Horsford, but moved to Horsham soon after. Its buildings included a church, a refectory and cloisters. It was dissolved in 1536 and all buildings but the refectory were demolished.
- 2.3.13 The 13<sup>th</sup> century saw Norfolk's main emphasis change from military dominance to economic development. A large percentage of the population died when the Black Death hit in 1349. A number of medieval settlements had a significant loss of population and some villages were abandoned. Farming remained important though, with the years around 1300 seeing medieval agriculture at its fullest stretch. Woodland proved particularly vulnerable to the expansion of tillage.

### ***Post Medieval (16<sup>th</sup> century to 1900)***

- 2.3.14 Since early medieval times, Norfolk had been the freest and most populous county in England. Open fields were ubiquitous but also quite 'irregular' in layout, with the holdings of particular farms generally being clustered in restricted areas of the township, something that facilitated early piecemeal enclosure.
- 2.3.15 However, this was to change with Parliamentary Enclosure, smaller parishes, such as Horstead, were acquired wholesale and enclosed before the end of the 17th century. More usually, as at Cawston, the landscape comprised a mixture of piecemeal enclosures, areas of open field and commons; a state of affairs that was not rationalised until the end of the 18th century. Bullocks, dairy and sheep were all farmed and wheat, rye and barley cultivated across Broadland.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.roundtowers.org.uk/toptwenty.html>

- 2.3.16 In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>14</sup>, over 160,000ha (31%) of Norfolk were enclosed by Parliamentary Enclosure Acts. Over large areas, the acts 'tidied up' the abandonment of open-field agriculture, which had been ongoing for centuries, finally brought small commons and wastes into cultivation, sometimes for the first time, or led to the improvement of heaths and fens. Whilst farming was to play an important role in the change of the visual landscape, so was the growth of minor settlements that started to dominate the landscape.
- 2.3.17 In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Norfolk was one of the wealthiest and most densely populated counties in Britain and contained over 700 rural parishes and more than 1500 manors. The Dissolution of the monastic settlements in the Reformation of 1536-1540, the associated fragmentation of estates and lands, and the ongoing development of manorial halls and parks characterise this period. Stately homes came into fashion in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the land surrounding the house being deliberately designed. Dutch gable brickwork was a hallmark of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and was used in Broadland on estates such as Blickling Hall.
- 2.3.18 Parkland made an important contribution to the landscape of Norfolk in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century and many of the great landscapes created during this period are still prominent features of the countryside. However, Broadland had few parks in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this possibly reflecting the aesthetic preferences of the gentry. In the following century, parks proliferated.
- 2.3.19 By 1880 over half of Norfolk was owned by landowners with more than one thousand acres (405 ha) and their houses, parks, farms and villages dominated much of the landscape of the county. Estates varied enormously in size and therefore wealth, from those who were owned by little more than gentlemen farmers to those controlling estate offices and huge workshops. Most of Broadland remained largely outside estate influence, with Gunton Estate, owned by the Harbord family, being the largest estate within the district.
- 2.3.20 The end of the golden age of the landed estate and the country house was fast approaching in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, precipitated by agricultural depression. This period was to coincide with the economic decline, which affected the entire country, leading to a major depopulation of the countryside. The late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century brought about the four-course crop rotation that dramatically altered the landscape with its large geometric enclosed fields.
- 2.3.21 The River Bure was improved in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century so that navigation as far as Aylsham became possible with the aids of locks, but constant dredging was needed. Traffic on this river included marl from Horstead, agricultural produce, flour, coal, timber and bricks. Competition from railways, initially, followed by the arrival of the motor lorry and private car, reduced demand for commercial traffic in Broadland. The Bure navigation finally closed after the great flood of 1912. Commercial traffic in Broadland lingered on into the 20<sup>th</sup> century but leisure traffic increased to replace it. The Norfolk Broads have been a popular destination for boating holidays

<sup>14</sup> An Historical Atlas of Norfolk (Trevor Ashwin & Alan Davidson Eds, 2005, Phillimore & Co. Ltd: Chichester)

since the Victorians discovered them in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst the industrial revolution was slow in Norfolk, the building of railways such as the Great Eastern Railway (1862-1922) and roads changed Broadland's landscape.

### ***Modern Period (1901 - present day)***

- 2.3.22 The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a mass decline in population and economy in Norfolk. Despite a general decline in farming, the World Wars increased farming in the area. During World War II, farming was to become an important industry, moving people back to the countryside and out of cities. During World War II, large tracts of the landscape were developed as airfields. The remains of World War II defensive structures are also visible within the landscape. By the time agriculture was finally de-controlled in 1954, some prosperity had returned to the industry and farmers began to tool up for mechanisation. In the late 1950s there was a radical restructuring in the pattern of land ownership with many farms becoming owner-occupied.
- 2.3.23 Since the start of the 20th century, development has occurred unevenly across the District and large areas of arable land still remain sparsely populated.

### ***Historic Environment Designations***

- 2.3.24 Broadland's landscape is the product of human activity over thousands of years. A variety of historic environment features within the Study Area are protected by both formal and informal designations and legislation in recognition of their historical and archaeological value, both locally and nationally. These include:
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments: there are 22 nationally important archaeological sites within Broadland (compared to 436 in Norfolk as a whole), which are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979).
  - Listed Buildings: There are 50 Grade I, 79 Grade II\* and 843 Grade II listed buildings of architectural merit, protected under the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990) (compared to 537 Grade I, 828 II\*, and 9152 Grade II in Norfolk as a whole).
  - Registered Historic Parks and Gardens: there are four historically designed landscapes within Broadland (one Grade II\* and three Grade II) included on the English Heritage non-statutory national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (compared to 52 in Norfolk as a whole). These are:
    - Blickling Hall
    - Catton Hall
    - Heydon Hall
    - Salle Park.

## **2.4 Past and Current Perceptions**

- 2.4.1 An examination of the way that others have perceived the landscape over time provides an insight to what particular features of the landscape have consistently attracted attention and comment. This section considers the

perception of the landscape of Broadland chiefly through its literary and artistic associations.

- 2.4.2 From the 17th to the 19th century Thorpe St Andrew became a fashionable place of residence for the wealthier citizens of Norwich. Armstrong wrote in 1781<sup>15</sup>:

*“The village of Thorpe is sometimes called the Richmond of Norfolk [and]...it is delightfully situated on a hanging hill ...[and has] become of late the residence of opulent manufacturers, several of whom have erected extensive buildings in it and laid out spacious gardens.”*

- 2.4.3 Several of these houses survive, though altered and appear in early 19th century paintings of the Norwich School such as John Sell Cotman’s ‘From my Father’s House at Thorpe’, Joseph Stannard’s ‘Thorpe Water Frolic: Afternoon’ and John Crome’s ‘View from the King’s Head Gardens’.

- 2.4.4 The Norfolk Broads (to the east of the Study Area), with their wide skies and scenic landscapes, were loved by 18th century British watercolourists of the Norwich School, Cotman and Crome, and also by Constable and Turner. They inspired these artists to initiate the great British watercolour tradition and continued to influence many 20th century artists such as Sir Alfred Munnings and Edward Seago. Today, the artist David Dane portrays some of Broadland’s landscape lesser known treasures in paintings known throughout the world<sup>16</sup>.

- 2.4.5 A famous description of 19th century Norwich is provided in chapter 14 of *Lavengro*, by George Borrow<sup>17</sup>:

*“A fine old city, truly, is that, view it from whatever side you will; but it shows best from the east, where the ground, bold and elevated, overlooks the fair and fertile valley in which it stands. Gazing from those heights, the eye beholds a scene which cannot fail to awaken, even in the least sensitive bosom, feelings of pleasure and admiration. At the foot of the heights flows a narrow and deep river, with an antique bridge communicating with a long and narrow suburb, flanked on either side by rich meadows of the brightest green, beyond which spreads the city; the fine old city, perhaps the most curious specimen at present extant of the genuine English town.”*

- 2.4.6 The Bure was a central location for Arthur Ransome’s children’s adventures stories *Coot Club* (1934) and the *Big Six* (1940). A passage in *Coot Club* (1934)<sup>18</sup> describes the hustle and bustle of riverside life in Wroxham:

*“There were boats everywhere, and boats of all kinds, from the big black wherry with her gaily painted mast, loading at the old granary by Wroxham bridge, and meant for nothing but hard work, to the punts of the boatmen going to and fro, and the motor-cruisers filling up with petrol, and the hundreds of big and little sailing yachts tied to the quays, or moored in rows,*

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.broadland.gov.uk/PDF/TSA\\_Draft\\_Character\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.broadland.gov.uk/PDF/TSA_Draft_Character_Statement.pdf) (accessed on 4th February 2008)

<sup>16</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/culture/david\\_dane](http://www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/culture/david_dane) (accessed on 4th February 2008)

<sup>17</sup> *Lavengro* (Borrow, G., 1851)

<sup>18</sup> *Coot Club* (Ransome, A., 1934)

*two and three deep, in the dykes and artificial harbours beside the main river.”*

- 2.4.7 Blickling and Heydon Halls feature in *The Cock and Bull Story*, filmed in 2004 whilst Heydon village and Hall featured in the movie *Up Rising*.

## **2.5 Forces for Change in the Landscape**

- 2.5.1 Use of land for housing, minerals, recreation, energy generation and other activities have resulted in a general erosion of the character, quality and diversity of the landscapes within the Study Area since the mid-twentieth century. The cumulative effects of small-scale and incremental changes have had a particularly marked effect on the character of the landscape.

- 2.5.2 The pace, mixture and scale of landscape will continue to change in the future, which may impact, positively or negatively, upon those qualities that make the landscape special. A key challenge is to understand, manage and direct future positive change in the landscape in ways that conserve and enhance its essential characteristics and valued attributes, whilst enabling sensitively designed development to be accommodated to meet social and economic need.

- 2.5.3 The key global, national and local forces for change that affect the character of the Study Area's landscapes are considered under the following main headings:

- Agriculture, Land Management and Diversification;
- Socio-Economic Characteristics;
- Infrastructure, Transport and Traffic;
- Built Development;
- Tourism and Water-based Recreation;
- Climate Change; and
- Renewable Energy.

### ***Agriculture, Land Management and Diversification***

- 2.5.4 Agricultural activity is a vital aspect of the rural environment within the Study Area and is a primary factor in shaping the character of the landscape. The Study encompasses a highly productive arable farming area. Pasture is not extensive.

- 2.5.5 Agriculture has the ability to substantially enhance and detract from the character of the landscape in a relatively short period of time, primarily due to an increase in mechanisation and intensive practices. These have since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and in particular over the last fifty years, contributed to the changes in the rural environment through intensive cropping, loss of field boundaries, introduction of a larger-scale field pattern, and the introduction of a larger-scale field pattern, drainage of marshes/wetlands and fens, and the introduction of new farm buildings. Pastures are dependent on appropriate livestock grazing practices.

- 2.5.6 Changes in farming practice and fluctuations in the agricultural economy have an important impact and these changes will only increase, as global

markets become a major influencing factor. Whilst the effects of post-1945 agricultural change on landscape character are well understood, future changes may result from increasing competition in a global market place, ongoing from the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the proposals of the Government Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, including proposed Entry-Level Agri-Environment Scheme (ELS) and Higher Tier Scheme, are yet to become clear. There may be ongoing adverse effect on character, as well as important opportunities to enhance and restore character as a result of changes in policy.

2.5.7 The future pressure on the land in the area comes from further intensification of the fens, however, there is also possible future potential for conservation and enhancement of the remaining semi-natural fenland habitat. There is also potential through agri-environmental schemes such as Environmental Stewardship to encourage farmers to make changes to their farming practices that would help restore the loss of important habitats and features within the landscape.

2.5.8 The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- Decrease in woodland and tree cover;
- Renewable energy;
- Continuing decline/loss of landscape features such as hedgerows, field margins and farm ponds as a result of maximising field size, lack of appropriate management and spray drift;
- Soil erosion as a result of autumn cultivation of arable crops;
- Increased pressure for new uses of 'marginal' land, including smallholdings, leisure uses and pony paddocks;
- Loss of grazing marsh in past through arable conversion;
- Increase in large arable farm units, which may lead to further homogenisation of the landscape, reduction in biodiversity and potential demand for more centralised and large-scale buildings such as grain storage facilities;
- Farm diversification such as the adoption or reuse of farm buildings for commercial, industrial and storage uses, which may conflict with historical/architectural character and the introduction of new industrial crops;
- Mineral extraction;
- Infilling of small pits, ponds and extraction sites;
- Growth of biomass crops.

### ***Socio-Economic Characteristics***

2.5.9 The social and economic characteristics of the towns in the Study Area, including Aylsham and the fringes of Norwich play an important role in the process of future change and regeneration within the region. In recent years there has been a change in the structure and type of employment away from traditional manufacturing and agriculture to the service industries including retail, tourism, education, office employment and the high-tech sector. Tourism is also a source of rural employment in the District, particularly within the villages along the edges of the Broads Authority Area.

2.5.10 The town centres, local centres within urban neighbourhoods and village shops provide the social economic focus of communities within the Study Area. The last 10 to 15 years have seen many changes in retailing, including the growth of regional shopping centres, the growth of out-of-town retail parks, extended opening hours and Sunday trading, and more recently internet shopping. All of these changes have had an effect on existing town and local centres.

2.5.11 Key socio-economic characteristics of Broadland District include:

- In April 2001 there was an estimated 118513 residents with a population structure of 49% male and 51% female, which was about average for the East of England region;
- The population density in 2001 averaged 2.15 people per square kilometre, which is below average for the region;
- In 2001 there was an unemployment rate of 1.9% of all economically active people aged 16-74.

### ***Infrastructure, Transport and Traffic***

2.5.12 Reflecting the national trend, the Study Area has seen increasing levels of car usage. This is leading to major congestion, pollution problems and pressures for new road schemes in the countryside between the towns, and road improvements that significantly affect landscape character. Upgrading of the rail network may create new types of pressure and the building of new multi-modal transport interchanges.

2.5.13 Throughout the Study Area there is a comprehensive network of major roads, which provide connections between Norwich and the main towns and villages; and to cities outside the area, including Peterborough, Cambridge and London. Main trunk roads crossing the District include the A1067, A140, A1151 and A47. There is also a direct railway line from Norwich to London.

2.5.14 The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- Construction of new roads, bypasses and service stations, including the introduction of new structures, lighting and earthworks into the landscape;
- Potential new route and construction of the Northern Distributor road;
- Road improvements that can have an urbanising effect, especially on rural lanes, by road widening, straightening and introduction of features such as kerbs, paving, highway lighting, visibility splays and signage;
- Increased requirement for parking provision in villages and towns which are popular with tourists, such as Aylsham and Wroxham.

### ***Built Development***

2.5.15 The pressures of development are a result of locally generated needs for requirements such as a strong housing market, jobs and transport. Urban development has placed an increasing pressure on all aspects of the landscape, over the last fifty years in particular. This has resulted in urban expansion into undeveloped rural areas, redevelopment and intensification of urban areas, increasing urbanisation and development of rural villages.

The urban fringe is often used to locate access roads, sewage works, waste disposal facilities and intensive recreation uses. However, the urban fringe also provides a setting for urban areas, and often contains important landscape features and/or habitats.

2.5.16 Relatively high levels of development have been absorbed by Norwich and the other smaller market towns in the Study Area, but there is a constant need for the provision of new houses and services. However, Green Belt policy has helped to constrain development and control the expansion of settlements.

2.5.17 The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- Quality of built environment;
- Loss/erosion of urban open spaces and of tree cover;
- Loss of night-time remoteness by lighting at urban fringes and street lights;
- Planting of non-native species;
- Decline in the condition of landscapes in the urban fringe, with problems such as lack of management of hedgerows/trees, poorly managed horse paddocks and fly-tipping;
- Loss of domestic gardens and hedges;
- Housing growth at the periphery of towns can extend the urban character of these areas into the landscape, as increased noise and light pollution and development leads to an urbanising effect on the rural landscape and loss of tranquillity;
- New strategic initiatives to maintain and enhance existing green spaces and corridors while creating a new provision of green infrastructure, as an integral part of new development.

### ***Tourism and Water-based Recreation***

2.5.18 Tourism is an important part of the local economy, particularly close to the Broads and Norwich. In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number and proportion of people playing sport and taking part in recreational activities. In addition the many 'traditional' villages and the countryside in the Study Area are an attraction in their own right with people often attracted to buy second homes. The rivers flowing through the area are important for informal and formal recreation such as angling, canoeing, sailing, boating, cycling and walking along set routes.

2.5.19 The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- Disturbance of habitat by inappropriate recreation;
- Increased desire for public access to the Broads, which would potentially lead to, increased disturbance and truncation of habitats such as marsh and salt marsh;
- Increased desire for water-based activities, including boat trips;
- Pressure from tourism to increase the capacity and size of caravan and camping areas and their associated facilities;
- Continued demand for golf courses, driving ranges and associated facilities;
- Localised fence clutter through management for recreation;



## ***Climate Change***

- 2.5.20 It is widely acknowledged that global climate change is inevitable, and that it is likely to have significant physical impacts on the landscape. The East of England is particularly sensitive to the effects of climate change. Changes in the form of increased temperatures, wetter winters and more extreme weather events have been identified in the last 10 years. The scenarios produced by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP02) suggests by 2080 the UK is likely to experience:
- Annual temperature rises by between 2 and 3.5°C;
  - More frequent high summer temperatures and very cold winters becoming increasingly rare.
  - Winters becoming wetter and summers becoming drier.
  - More frequent summer droughts, winter flooding and storms.
  - Sea-levels rising between 26 and 86 cm above the current level.
- 2.5.21 Whilst there are still uncertainties regarding exact changes at regional and local levels, it is clear there could be both direct and indirect impacts on landscape character. The coastal and fenland areas are critical and irreplaceable natural assets supporting diverse internationally important species composition, habitat fragmentation, water resources, soils, agricultural land use, recreation and tourism and cultural heritage.
- 2.5.22 There is future pressure for further intensification of the marshland fringe habitats, however there is also possible future potential for saltmarsh habitat creation and restoration through managed realignment along certain stretches of the coastline.
- 2.5.23 The key issues affecting landscape character include:
- Increases in sea levels, especially if coupled with increases in storm activity, may cause greater erosion of habitats and also soil erosion;
  - Rising sea levels may also affect agricultural land, which is currently located on reclaimed marshland;
  - Rich agricultural land below 5m AOD is at risk of saline intrusion from rising sea levels. There may be an increased requirement for irrigation reservoirs to store winter rainfall and for use of irrigation equipment etc. in summer. Traditional arable crops may also be replaced by more summer drought tolerant species such as sunflowers and maize;
  - Damage to historic landscapes and archaeological sites may occur through erosion from sea level rise and flooding, as well as through changes in farming practice and soil desiccation;
  - Increasing amount of exotic (non-native) tree planting;
  - Loss of existing vegetation as a result of inability to adapt to saltwater conditions.

## ***Renewable Energy***

- 2.5.24 The UK faces difficult challenges in meeting its energy policy goals. Renewable energy as a source of low-carbon, indigenous electricity generation is central to reducing emissions and maintaining the reliability of

our energy supplies at a time when our indigenous fossil fuels are declining more rapidly than expected (DTI, 2006). The Government estimates that renewable sources of energy and in particular offshore and onshore wind power could contribute between 10% by 2010 and 15% of current UK electricity by 2015.

2.5.25 As part of meeting the national target, the East of England's electricity generation target from renewable sources by 2010 is 14% (EEEEGR, 2006). Broadland, as a local authority, is required to consider the contribution that the District can make to meeting energy needs, as well as the contribution that investment in renewable energy can make in lessening the potential impact of global warming.

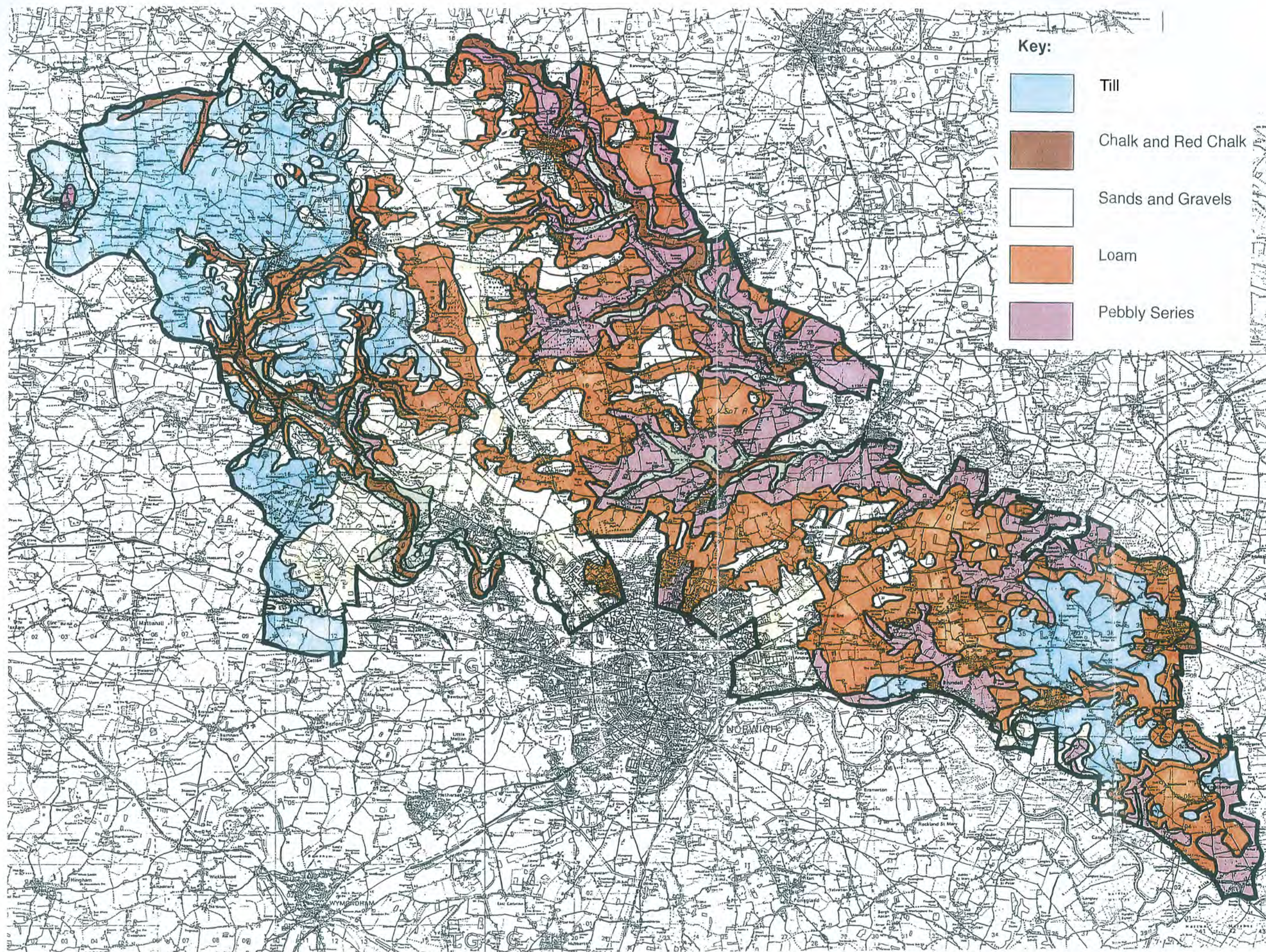
2.5.26 The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- The visual impact of on-shore and off-shore (near-shore) wind turbine developments individually and cumulatively on the landscape character;
- The potential changes to established agricultural landscape character arising from large-scale energy-crop production;
- Domestic solar panels and turbines.
- [Large scale solar farms](#)



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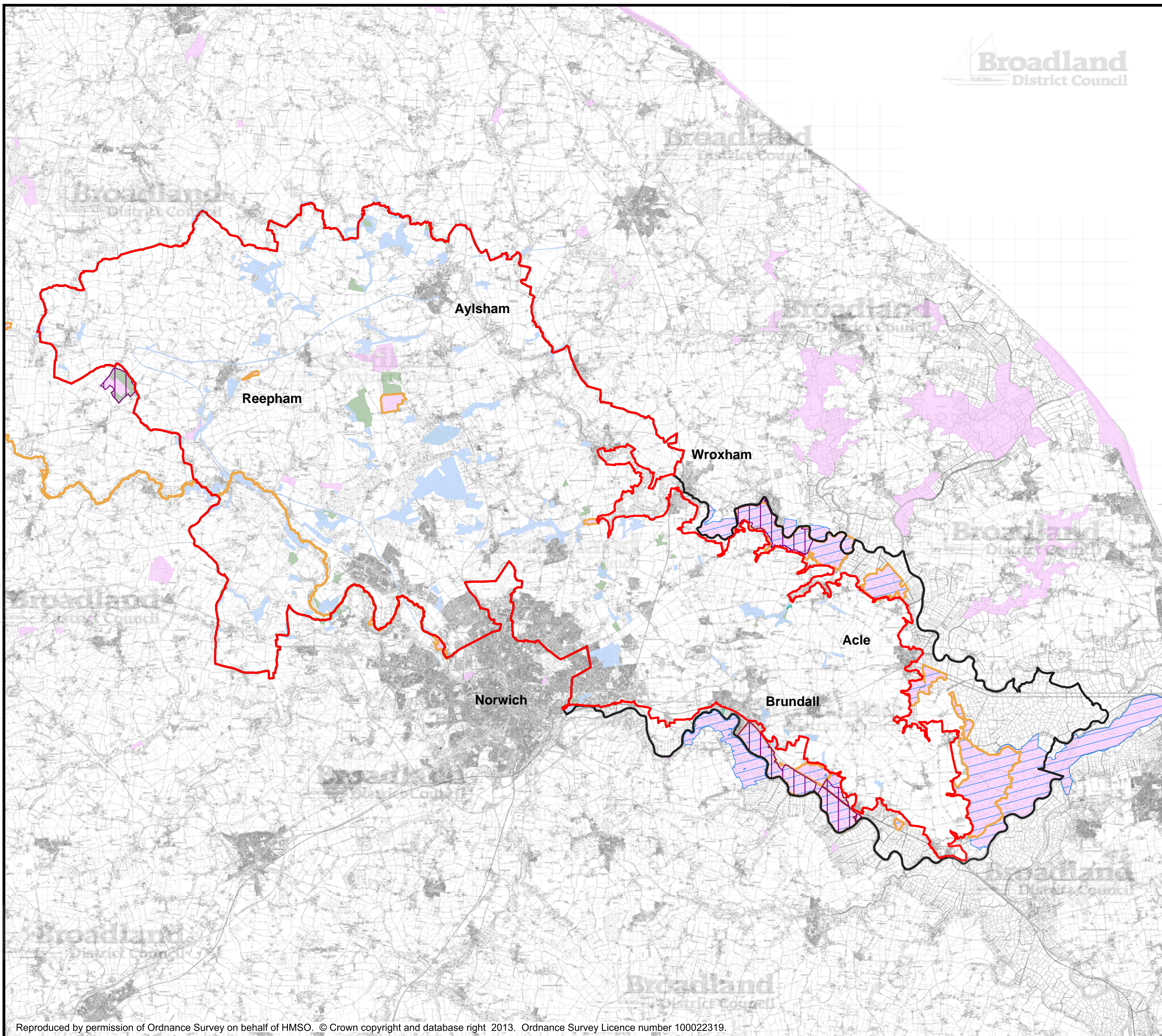




**Fig. 2.3**  
**Updated September 2013**  
**Nature Conservation**  
**Designations**

**Key**

- Study Area Boundary
- Broads Authority Area
- Ramsar Sites
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodland
- County Wildlife Site
- Local Nature Reserve



Scale 1:170,000



### 3.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION AND EVALUATION

#### 3.1 General

- 3.1.1 This section provides an overview of landscape character across the District as a whole within its national and county context, and provides detailed 'profiles' of the 6 Landscape Character Types and 16 Landscape Character Areas identified by the assessment. The profiles describe the character of each Landscape Character Unit, and set out management strategy and objectives and guidelines for informing environmental land management initiatives and land use planning decisions.
- 3.1.2 Judgements about the acceptability, or otherwise, of development and/or land management proposals should take account of:
- (i) the description and evaluation of the relevant Landscape Character Type(s) related to the proposal; and
  - (ii) the description and evaluation of the relevant Landscape Character Areas(s) related to the proposal.

#### 3.2 Landscape Character Context

- 3.2.1 The descriptions of Landscape Character Types and Areas within Section 3.3, should be read in conjunction with the information set out below to ensure that the contextual relationship within the wider landscape is understood.

##### ***National Character Context***

- 3.2.2 The national context for defining the boundaries of the different Landscape Character Units within the District is provided by the Countryside Character Areas from the Character of England Map<sup>19</sup>.
- 3.2.3 As illustrated in **Figure 3.1**, the District contains part of the following five Countryside Character Areas defined at 1:250,000 scale:
- Mid Norfolk (84)
  - Central North Norfolk (78)
  - North East Norfolk and Flegg (79)
  - The Broads (80)
- 3.2.4 The character of these Countryside Character Areas is described in Countryside Character Volume 6, published by the Countryside Agency<sup>20</sup>.
- 3.2.5 The Countryside Character Areas provide the contextual framework within which more detailed classifications of Landscape Character Units at 1:50,000 (County) and 1:25,000 (District) can be defined.

<sup>19</sup> Character of England Map (Countryside Agency, English Nature Rural Development Service, English Heritage, updated 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Countryside Character Volume 6 – East of England (Countryside Agency, 1999).

- 3.2.6 The District is also covered by the Countryside Agency's National Landscape Typology (Level 1), defined at 250,000 scale using GIS (as shown in **Figure 3.2**). This defines a series of homogenous units of land with a uniform character that are distinct from each other on the basis of definitive natural and cultural attributes.

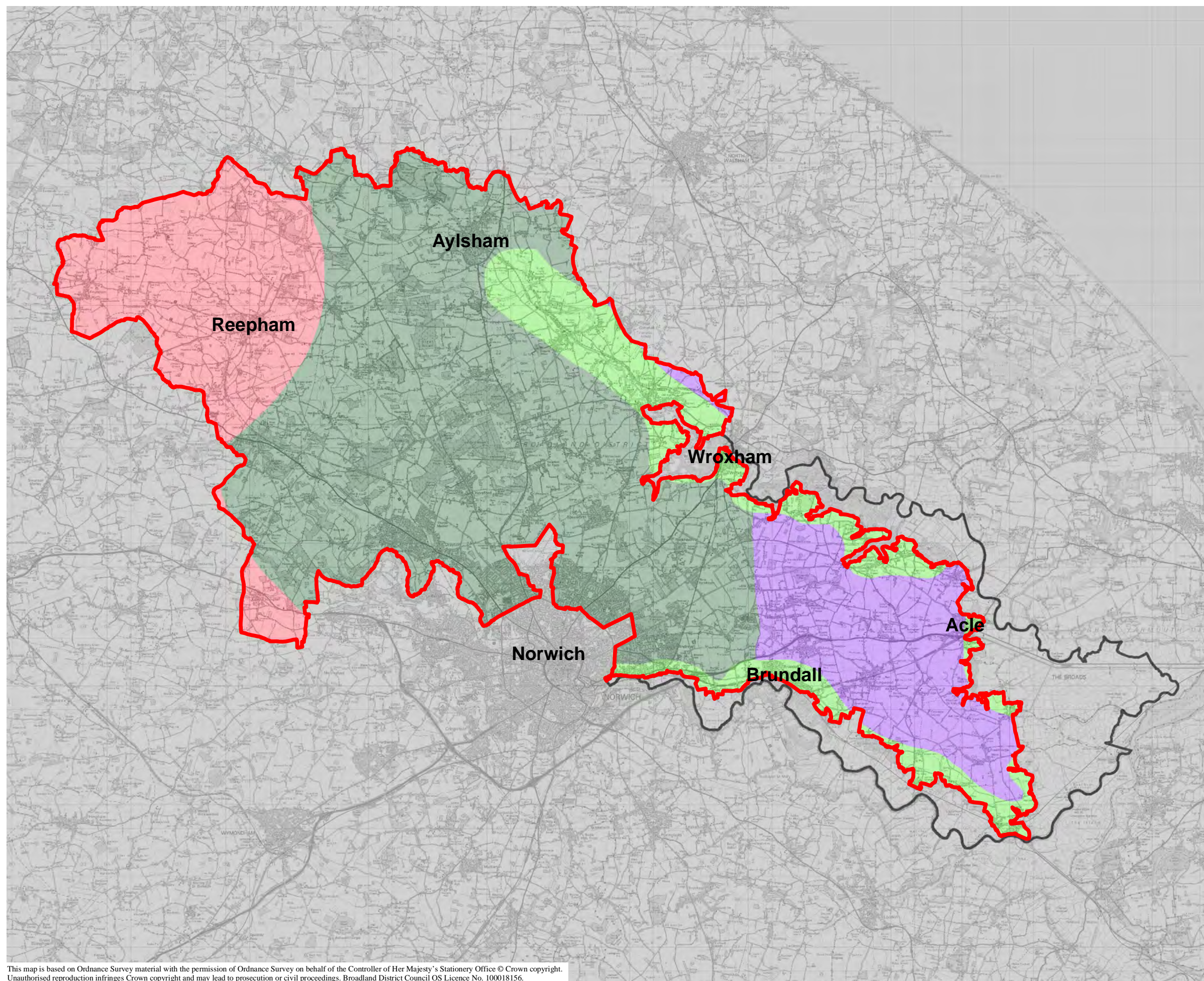
### ***County Character Context***

- 3.2.7 The current landscape character framework for Norfolk County is provided by the Landscape Description Units (Level 2) prepared by the Living Landscapes Project for the County Council. This defines a series of homogenous units of land with a uniform character, at a scale of 1:50,000 (as shown on **Figure 3.3**). This information has informed the definition of Landscape Character Types for the District.

### ***The District Assessment***

- 3.2.8 The Existing Landscape Character Assessment for the District (completed in 1999) identifies Landscape Character Areas at a scale of 1:25,000. For the purposes of this Study, the boundaries of these Landscape Character Areas have been reviewed and integrated, where possible, into the updated classification.
- 3.2.9 Six Landscape Character Types are defined within the District. These are:
- River Valley (Type A)
  - Woodland Heath Mosaic (Type B)
  - Plateau Farmlands (Type C)
  - Tributary Farmland (Type D)
  - Wooded Estatelands (Type E)
  - Marshes Fringe (Type F)
- 3.2.10 Each of the above generic Landscape Character Types has a distinct and relatively homogenous character with similar physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, land cover, biodiversity and historical evolution.
- 3.2.11 Within each of the 6 generic Landscape Character Types, 16 Landscape Character Areas have been identified within the District. The Landscape Character Areas reflect distinctive variations in local character within each Landscape Character Type based on visual analysis in the field to assess how different combinations of physical features and perceptual qualities such as scale, pattern, tranquillity, cultural associations etc. create areas of distinctive landscape character.





**KEY**

**Joint Character Areas  
(Source: Natural England)**

- 78 Central North Norfolk
- 79 North East Norfolk and Flegg
- 80 The Broads
- 84 Mid Norfolk

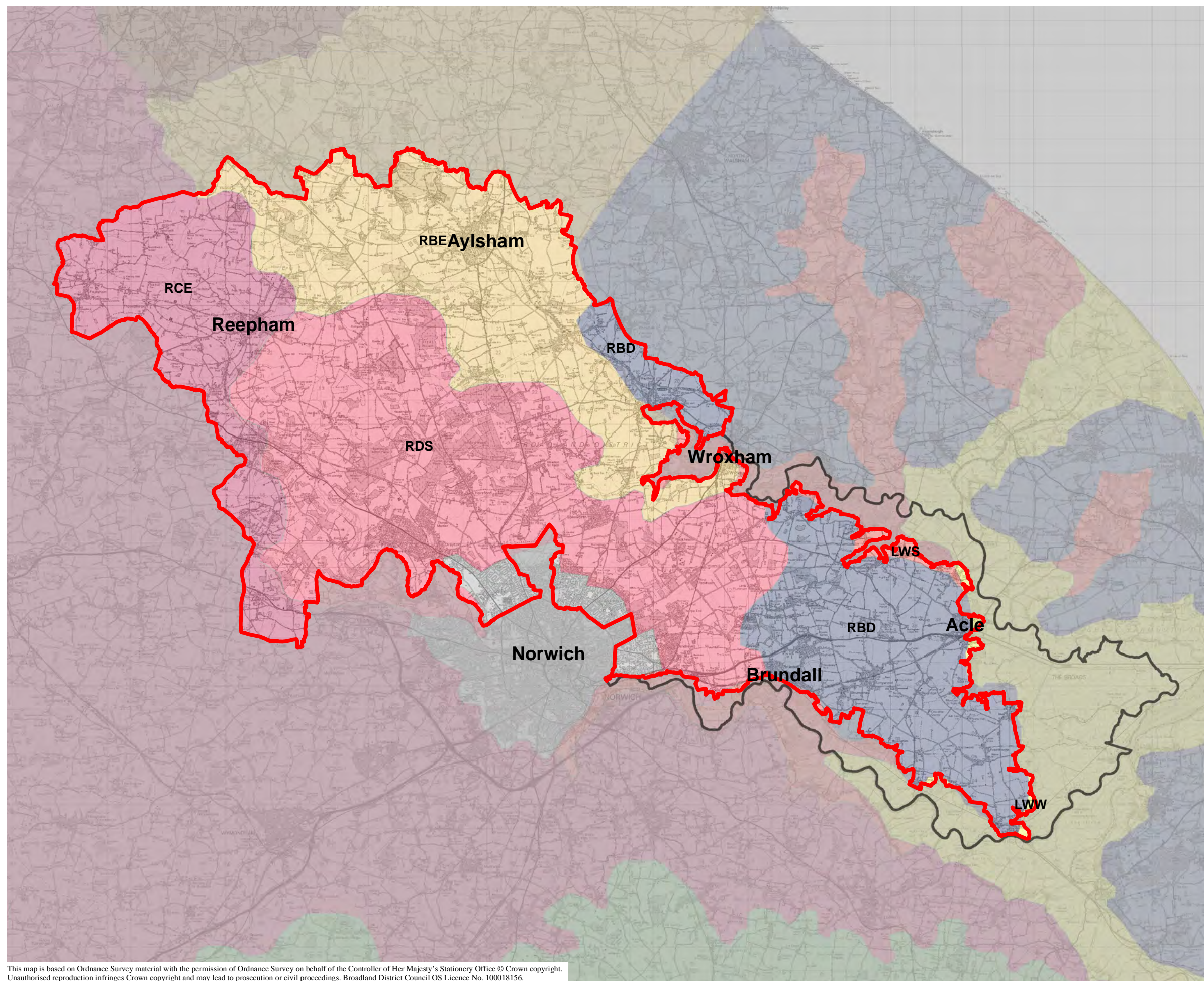
- Study Area Boundary
- Broads Authority Area

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**FIGURE 3.1**  
**NATIONAL JOINT CHARACTER AREAS**  
(1:250,000)





## KEY

 Study Area Boundary

 Broads Authority Area

## National Landscape Character Types

### Physiography (1st letter)

L Lowlands

R Intermediate

### Landcover (2nd letter)

B Other Light Land

C Clayland

D Heath & Moorland

W Wetland

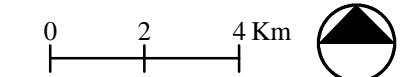
### Cultural Pattern (3rd letter)

D Dispersed unwooded

E Wooded - estateland

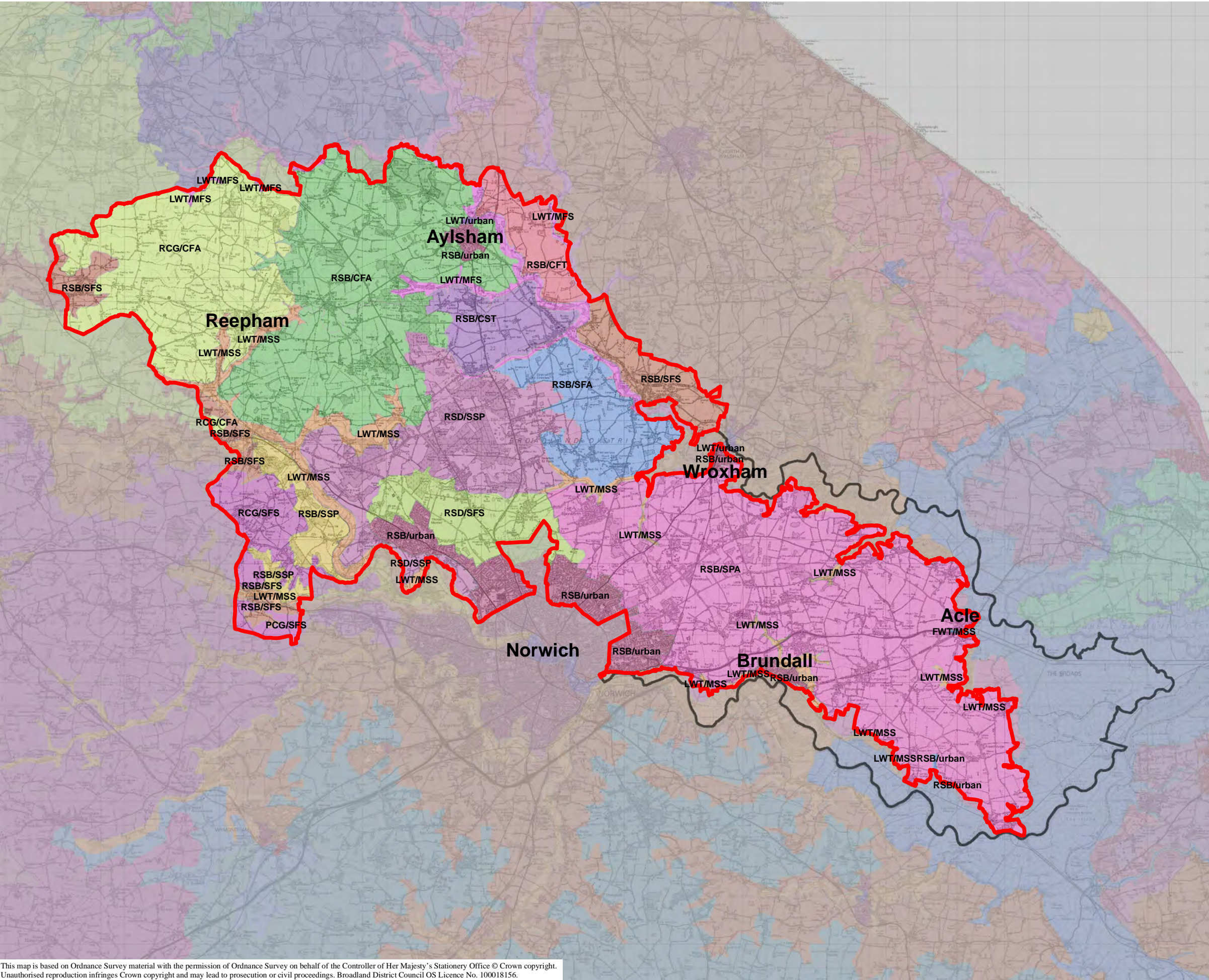
S Wooded - secondary

W Wetland/waste unwooded



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KEY

- Study Area Boundary
- Broads Authority Area

County Landscape Typology

NATURAL

Geology/Physiography (1st letter)

- F - Fluvial Drift
- L - Vales & Valleys
- R - Rolling lowland

Rock Type (2nd letter)

- C - Clay and Chalky Till
- S - Soft Sst / Sandy Drift
- T - Other Till / Plateau Drift
- W - Alluvium / Fen Peat

Soils (3rd letter)

- B - Deep Soils
- D - Impoverished Soils
- G - Gleyed Soils
- T - Bog / Fen Peat

CULTURAL

Settlement (1st letter)

- C - Clustered
- M - Unsettled Meadow
- S - Mod-high Dispersal with Farms

Farm Type (2nd letter)

- F - Large Farms
- S - Small Farms

Tree Cover (3rd letter)

- A - Ancient Woods
- P - Estate Plantations
- S - Secondary / Recent

Urban

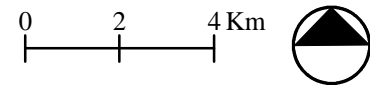
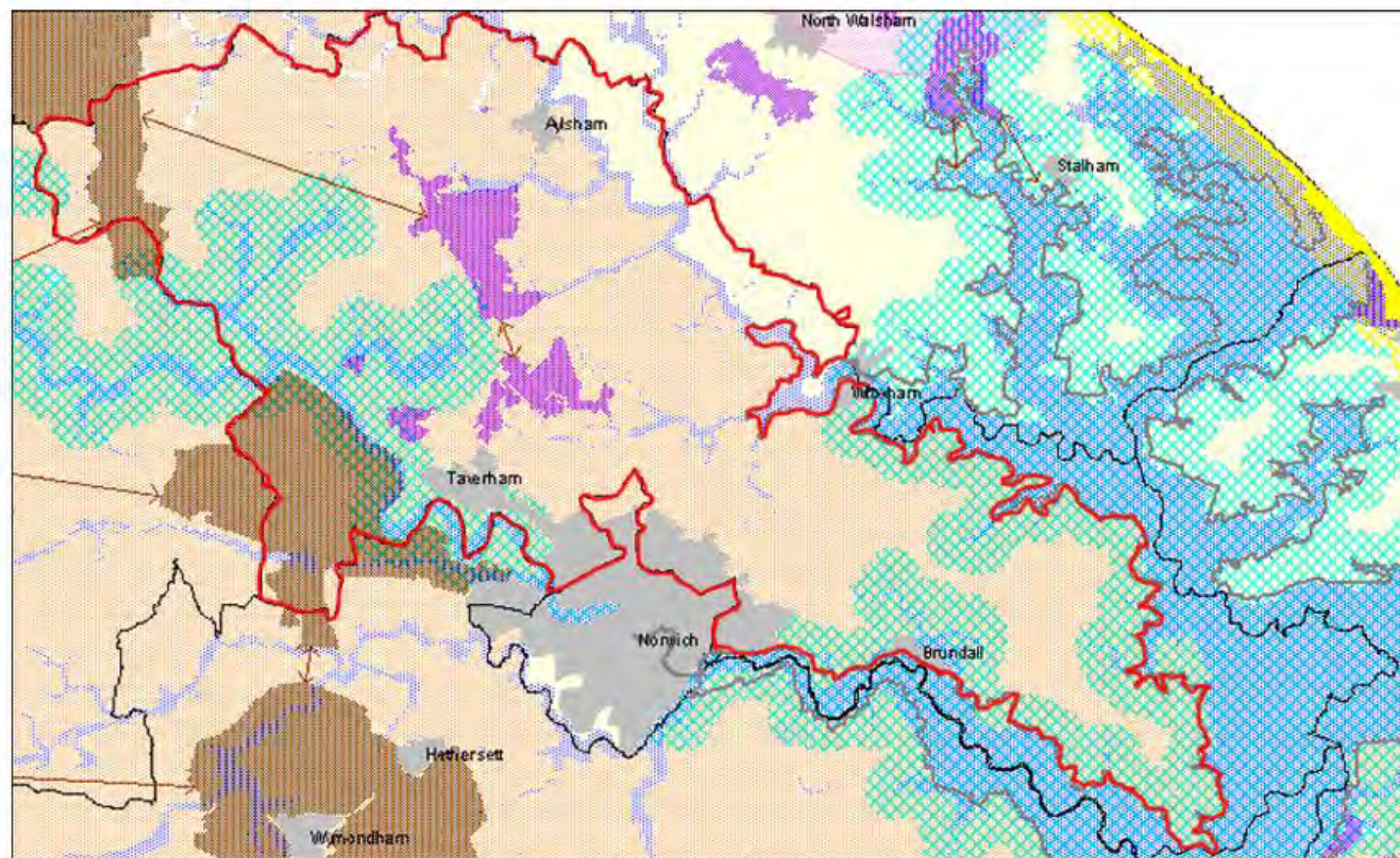


FIGURE 3.3  
COUNTY LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGY





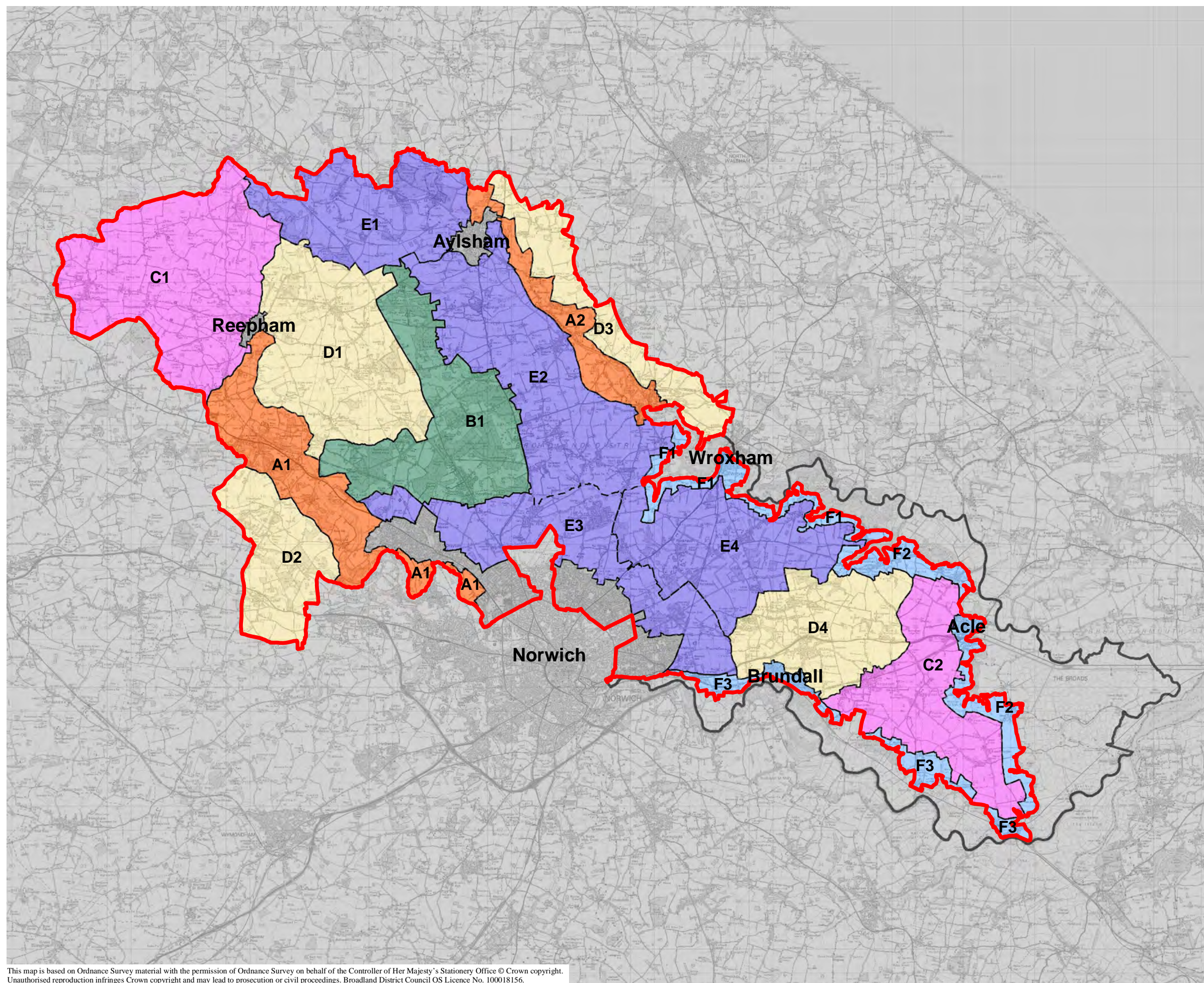
# KEY

- Study Area Boundary
- Broads Authority Area
- Woodland corridors
- Heathland corridors
- Heathland core areas
- Paston Barn bat site management area
- Coastal habitat zone
- Woodland core areas
- Wetland habitat zone
- Urban Areas
- Zone of grassland-heathland-woodland
- Zone of general habitat enhancement
- River and Broads buffer

(Based on a Figure produced by Norfolk County Council May 2007)





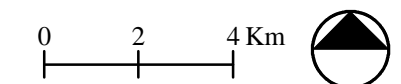


## KEY

- Study Area Boundary
- Broads Authority Area

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- A - River Valley**
  - A1 - Wensum River Valley
  - A2 - Bure River Valley
- B - Woodland Heath Mosaic**
  - B1 - Horsford Woodland Heath Mosaic
- C - Plateau Farmland**
  - C1 - Foulsham and Reepham Plateau Farmland
  - C2 - Freethorpe Plateau Farmland
- D - Tributary Farmland**
  - D1 - Cawston Tributary Farmland
  - D2 - Weston Green Tributary Farmland
  - D3 - Coltishall Tributary Farmland
  - D4 - Blofield Tributary Farmland
- E - Wooded Estatlands**
  - E1 - Blickling and Oulton Wooded Estatlands
  - E2 - Marsham and Hainford Wooded Estatlands
  - E3 - Spixworth Wooded Estatlands
  - E4 - Rackheath and Salhouse Wooded Estatlands
- F - Marshes Fringe**
  - F1 - Wroxham to Ranworth Marshes Fringe
  - F2 - South Walsham to Reedham Marshes Fringe
  - F3 - Reedham to Thorpe Marshes Fringe
- Urban**



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### 3.2.12 The Landscape Character Areas are:

#### **A RIVER VALLEY**

A1: River Wensum

A2: River Bure

#### **B WOODLAND HEATH MOSAIC**

B1: Horsford

#### **C PLATEAU FARMLAND**

C1: Foulsham and Reepham

C2: Freethorpe

#### **D TRIBUTARY FARMLAND**

D1: Cawston

D2: Weston Green

D3: Coltishall

D4: Blofield

#### **E WOODED ESTATELANDS**

E1: Blickling and Oulton

E2: Marsham and Hainford

E3: Spixworth

E4: Rackheath and Salhouse

#### **F MARSHES FRINGE**

F1: Wroxham to Ranworth

F2: South Walsham to Reedham

F3: Reedham to Thorpe

## **3.3 Landscape Character Types and Areas**

3.3.1 This section of the report describes the variations in the character of the Broadland Landscape. For the purposes of the District-wide assessment, emphasis is placed upon the definition, characterisation and evaluation of Landscape Character Areas at a scale of 1:25,000 within the Landscape Character Types. Detailed 'profiles' for each of the Landscape Character Types shown on Figure 3.5 are provided and structured as follows:

- Location and Boundaries
- Key Characteristics
- Summary of Visual Character
- Historic Environment Character
- Ecological Character
- Key Forces for Change
- Landscape Condition and Strength of Character
- Management Strategy and Objectives

3.3.2 For each Landscape Character Area identified within a Landscape Character Type, a short profile is provided, structured as follows:

- Summary of Visual Character
- Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

- Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 3.3.3 The evaluation sections of each Landscape Character Area profile provide a 'toolkit' of guidance to inform the planning and design of development proposals.
- 3.3.4 As acknowledged by the Countryside Agency's guidelines, landscape is a continuum and character does not in general change abruptly on the ground. More commonly, the character of the landscape will change gradually rather than suddenly, and therefore boundaries drawn between Landscape Character Types and Areas shown in **Figure 3.5** should be considered to reflect zones of transition in many cases. In addition, the boundaries drawn around Landscape Character Types and Areas has been defined and mapped at a scale of 1:25,000, and the assessment is therefore only suitable for use at this scale. This should be taken into consideration when the assessment is being used to inform decision-making to development and land management proposals.