



**Norfolk Coast Partnership**

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**TOWARDS A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO  
INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE PLANNING IN NORFOLK**

**Final Report**

**December 2006**

***CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES***

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*Environment Landscape Planning*

*in association with  
Alison Farmer Associates*



## Norfolk Coast Partnership

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# TOWARDS A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE PLANNING IN NORFOLK

**Final Report**

**Approved By:** Dominic Watkins

**Signed:**



**Position:** Director

**Date:** 14 December 2006

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*Environment Landscape Planning*

11102202R\_Final Report|\_DW\_14-12-06



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was carried out by Chris Blandford Associates (CBA), in association with Alison Farmer Associates, under the guidance of a Steering Group of organisations drawn from within the Norfolk Coast Partnership. The Steering Group comprised:

- Alison Yardy Norfolk County Council
- Chris Smith Natural England
- Chris Yardley North Norfolk District Council
- Gemma Cousins King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
- Helen Ledger Broads Authority
- James Afflatt King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
- Judith Cantell Norfolk County Council
- Lesley Harrison Broads Authority
- Mike Houldsworth King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
- Neil Featherstone Norfolk Coast AONB/Partnership
- Peter Holborn Suffolk County Council
- Polly Wake North Norfolk District Council
- Sarah Slade Great Yarmouth Borough Council

We would like to extend our thanks to the Steering Group for their assistance in providing advice and information for the study. We also acknowledge the assistance provided by Reg Land (Norfolk Wildlife Trust), Scott Perkins (Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership) and David Gurney and Paul Thorogood (Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service).

The CBA Project Team comprised:

- Dominic Watkins
- Alison Farmer
- Huw James





## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Chris Blandford Associates (CBA), in association with Alison Farmer Associates, were appointed in May 2006 by the Norfolk Coast Partnership to advise on the development of a co-ordinated approach to integrated landscape planning across the planning authorities within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

1.1.2 The AONB includes land covered by four planning authorities – the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk (203.6km<sup>2</sup>), North Norfolk District Council (242.5km<sup>2</sup>), Great Yarmouth Borough Council (6.9km<sup>2</sup>) and The Broads Authority (7.2km<sup>2</sup> – a small area of the eastern outlier of the AONB overlaps with The Broads). They are all at different stages of development of their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and Landscape Character Assessments.

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

1.2.1 In line with the brief, the primary aim of the study is to facilitate a more consistent approach to development and use of Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) in supporting policy formulation, strategic planning and development control by the planning authorities with land in the AONB.

1.2.2 It is anticipated that the study may also be of interest to other planning authorities and relevant agencies throughout Norfolk.

1.2.3 The objectives of the study are to:

- review existing methodologies for using LCA in each planning authority area, identify potential inconsistencies and recommend a consistent methodology for all districts.
- review the Historic Landscape Characterisation information and recommend a methodology for incorporation into the developing LCAs.
- review the biodiversity information available and recommend a methodology for incorporation into the developing LCAs.

- review the current state of policy development for landscape and the AONB within the various LDFs that will cover the AONB, investigate the potential for development of consistent policies and develop recommendations for these policies.
- investigate a simple methodology or ‘toolkit’ to aid use of LCAs by developers and development control officers, with reference to demonstration work completed by the former Countryside Agency.

### **1.3 Approach to the Study**

1.3.1 The following tasks were undertaken as part of the study:

- review of available LCA work currently in progress by the planning authorities (Section 2.0);
- review of Historic Landscape Characterisation, and the currently available information emerging from the Norfolk Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (Section 3.0);
- review of Ecological Network Mapping, and the information provided by the Norfolk Ecological Network Mapping Project (Section 4.0);
- brief review of European, national, regional and local policy framework relevant to landscape protection and enhancement (Section 5.0);
- review of Countryside Agency Demonstration Project studies from West Sussex and High Peak Borough concerning (i) the use of LCA to inform criteria based planning policies and guidance in Local Development Documents and (ii) the preparation of Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Documents respectively (Section 6.0);
- liaison with relevant officers from the AONB, the County Council and the four planning authorities and other relevant organisations to investigate the potential for developing a consistent approach to policy formulation and use of LCAs;
- meetings with the Steering Group to discuss the emerging findings of the review work;
- development of recommendations for consideration by the Norfolk Coast Partnership (Section 7.0).
- production of a concise report of the study’s findings.

## 1.4 Application of Study Findings

1.4.1 It is intended that the study will be used by the Norfolk Coast Partnership to provide a framework and 'template' for:

- development of consistent non-technical summary descriptions of landscape character, including assessments of condition, pressure for change and sensitivity, and preferred recommendations for management within districts covering the AONB;
- consistent integration of HLC and biodiversity information into the above descriptions;
- development of consistent policies for landscape and the AONB within the Local Development Frameworks;
- development of consistent landscape Supplementary Planning Documents for the planning authorities within the AONB;
- effective use of LCA descriptions and documents by development control officers (perhaps through use of a simple 'toolkit');
- use or simple adaptation of LCA descriptions and documents by those preparing applications for agri-environment schemes and by local communities (e.g in parish plans).

1.4.2 In parallel to this study, CBA were appointed in May 2006 by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council to prepare a Landscape Character Assessment for the Borough to inform the emerging Local Development Framework. One aim of this study was to pilot the methodology for integrated LCA proposed in Sections 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 of this report (subject to dataset availability). The Landscape Character Assessment was completed in December 2006.



## **2.0 REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS**





## **2.0 REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS**

### **2.1 Definition of Landscape Character Assessment**

2.1.1 *Landscape character* is a distinct, recognisable pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

2.1.2 *Landscape Character Assessment* (LCA) is the process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character<sup>1</sup>. LCA is a key tool and framework for dealing with landscape issues. It focuses on the unique combinations of elements and features which make each landscape distinctive and therefore provides valuable data to assist in managing change. LCA is a positive tool which helps identify opportunities as well as priorities and not just constraints.

### **2.2 Key Things to Know About the Process**

#### *Two separate stages - Characterisation and judgements*

2.2.1 There are two separate stages to LCA - stage one relates to characterisation and stage two to making judgements. The characterisation stage is value free and is concerned primarily with character i.e. it focuses on identifying, classifying, mapping and describing areas of distinctive character and is neutral. Stage two involves making judgements based on an understanding of character such as developing policy and determining sensitivity or value. It requires giving an opinion on landscape and the acceptability of change so that it may inform decision making whether in relation to land management or development.

#### *Landscape character can be classified as types and areas*

2.2.2 *Landscape character types* are homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different places, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement patterns.

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency pg 8.

2.2.3 *Landscape character areas* are unique areas, which are specific to one place. Character descriptions focus on the difference between an area from adjoining areas and its distinctiveness.

2.2.4 The distinction between types and areas is also reflected in their naming - landscape character types have generic names such as 'marsh' but landscape character areas take on the name of specific places e.g. Burgh Castle Marshes.

#### *Application at a variety of scales*

2.2.5 Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at a variety of scales which ideally should 'nest together' i.e. the more detailed assessments should fit within a framework of more broad brush assessments.

2.2.6 At a national level there are the National Joint Character Areas<sup>2</sup> and a digitally generated National Typology (know as Landscape Description Units Level 1). This mapping has been undertaken at 1:250,000 scale and is broad brush.

2.2.7 At County level there may be character assessments defining areas and types. There may also be a county typology (know as Landscape Description Units Level 2). These assessments are generally undertaken at 1:50,000 scale.

2.2.8 Both the national and county typologies mentioned above are based on digital data only and generally have not been verified in the field. They therefore do not provide a finalised character assessment for an area but provide useful background data, which can provide a local character assessment with a head start and also assist in ensuring continuity of baseline data for more detailed assessments in adjoining districts.

2.2.9 At the District or local level there may be character assessments defining more detailed areas (know as local character areas) and types. These assessments are undertaken at 1:25,000 scale.

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<sup>2</sup> Information on the National Joint Character Areas can be found on the Countryside Agency (Natural England) website.

- 2.2.10 It is important that landscape character assessments are carried out at an appropriate scale to suit different circumstances and purposes - 'no one size fits all'. However assessments at District and County level should relate to classifications of areas and or types developed in adjoining administrative areas where feasible.

*Links to other studies*

- 2.2.11 There are strong links to earth science, ecological network mapping (ENM) and historic landscape characterisation (HLC) and also to community and cultural concerns. To understand landscape fully one needs information on all these aspects of character and to involve stakeholders in assessment. Approaches to incorporating this information in the LCA process are evolving. Sections 3.0 and 4.0 of this report explore how this data and in particular HLC and ENM can be integrated into the LCA process and at what stages.

### **2.3 A Review of Existing Assessments in Norfolk**

- 2.3.1 Landscape character assessments have been carried out in a number of areas at a number of scales within Norfolk County. Inconsistencies between assessments may present difficulties in using LCA. Where the LCA classification at the boundary of two administrative areas mismatches, problems may arise in; assessing the sensitivity or capacity of the landscape; developing consistent planning policy; making decisions on the appropriateness of development; and land management initiatives. This is particularly pertinent for the Norfolk AONB, which must work with landscape assessments and planning policy across four district planning authorities.
- 2.3.2 The existing assessments prepared by the local authorities, Broads Authority and the AONB have therefore been reviewed systematically in relation to best practice set out above.
- 2.3.3 **Table 1 - Summary of Landscape Character Assessments** sets out the existing LCA coverage for Norfolk and the extent to which existing assessments have followed best practice.
- 2.3.4 **Table 2 – Hierarchy of Landscape Character Types** sets out the extent to which the landscape type classifications for each of the district assessments (relevant to the Norfolk AONB) relate to one another i.e. if the types defined are the same, different or sub-types. This is particularly relevant in determining if classifications for each district enable a coherent classification of types for the Norfolk AONB.

**Table 1: Summary of Landscape Character Assessments**

	<b>Norfolk County<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>King's Lynn &amp; West Norfolk Borough/Breckland District</b>	<b>King's Lynn &amp; West Norfolk Borough</b>	<b>North Norfolk District</b>	<b>Great Yarmouth Borough</b>	<b>The Broads Authority</b>	<b>Norfolk Coast AONB<sup>4</sup></b>
<b>Date</b>	2003	2003	2006	2005-06	Pending	2005-06	1995
<b>Undertaken by</b>	Living Landscapes	LUC	CBA	In house	N/A	The Broads Authority/Norfolk CC	Norfolk CC for the Countryside Commission
<b>Ref to LDUs</b>	Level 2	Yes (Level 1)	Yes (Level 2)	Yes (Level 2)	N/A	Datasets used as background (e.g. drift geology) but final LDUs not fine grained enough	No - predates
<b>Typology</b>	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
<b>Areas</b>	N/A	No	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No
<b>Scale of mapping</b>	1:50,000 (Level 2)	1:25,000 (Level 3)	1:25,000 (Level 3)	1:25,000 (Level 3)	N/A	1:25,000 (Level 3)	?
<b>Detailed description for:</b>	N/A	Types	Types and Areas	Types	N/A	Areas	Types
<b>Correlation across boundaries</b>	N/A	Predates North Norfolk assessment	Yes – strong correlation with North Norfolk and other adjacent districts	Moderate correlation with KL & WN types and NBA types (latter is more detailed)	N/A	Moderate correlation with North Norfolk types	Predates all other assessments

<sup>3</sup> A county-wide landscape character assessment was previously undertaken by Norfolk CC in 1995

<sup>4</sup> The Norfolk Coast Landscape - An assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Countryside Commission, CCP 486, 1995)

	<b>Norfolk County<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>King's Lynn &amp; West Norfolk Borough/Breckland District</b>	<b>King's Lynn &amp; West Norfolk Borough</b>	<b>North Norfolk District</b>	<b>Great Yarmouth Borough</b>	<b>The Broads Authority</b>	<b>Norfolk Coast AONB<sup>4</sup></b>
<b>Incorporation of HLC data</b>	Utilises basic datasets which closely relate to historic land use patterns	No – predates HLC project	No – predates availability of full datasets [specialist expertise/local knowledge used instead]	No – predates availability of full datasets [specialist expertise/local knowledge used instead]	N/A	Predates availability of full datasets – used in limited way with specialist expertise/local knowledge used as well	No – predates HLC project
<b>Incorporation of ENM</b>	Utilises basic datasets which closely relate to habitats	No	Yes	Input of key data sets. More recent pilot with biodiversity mapping - yet to be incorporated	N/A	Input of key data sets and input from experts within the Authority	No – predates ENM project
<b>Development of judgements</b>	N/A	Capacity assessment for wind farm development	Yes - landscape condition/strength of character, inherent landscape sensitivities, management strategy/objectives and planning guidelines	Sensitivity of landscape to change	N/A	Not as yet	Guidelines
<b>Purpose of study</b>	To form a consistent basis to inform all other more detailed district (Level 3) assessments	To assess landscape capacity for wind farm development	To inform planning decisions, input into LDF and provide a general template for other assessments across Norfolk.	To inform planning decisions and input into LDF	N/A	To inform planning decisions and input into LDF	To celebrate the AONB landscape and assist in land management

**Table 2: Hierarchy of Landscape Character Types**

<b>General Type</b>	<b>King's Lynn &amp; West Norfolk Borough 1:25,000</b>	<b>North Norfolk District 1:25,000</b>	<b>Broads Authority (sub-types) 1:25,000 and local</b>
Farmland	Rolling Open Farmland	Parliamentary Enclosed Rolling Open Farmland	N/A
	Plateau Farmland	Parliamentary Enclosed Rolling Open Farmland	N/A
	Settled Farmland with Plantations	N/A	N/A
	Farmland with woodland and wetland	N/A	N/A
	The Fens - Settled Inland Marshes	N/A	N/A
	The Fens - Open Inland Marshes	N/A	N/A
	Settled Tributary Farmland	Randomly Enclosed Rolling Open Farmland	N/A
River Valley and Broad	N/A	Broads Fringe	Upland (all-non wetland)
	N/A	Broads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broads</li> <li>• Carr Woodland</li> <li>• Peat 'Fen' Areas</li> <li>• Rivers and Ponds</li> </ul>
	River Valleys	Small Valleys  Large Valleys	Upper River Valley Marshlands
Settlements	Urban area	Coastal Towns and Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlements</li> <li>• Settlement Fringe</li> <li>• Industrial and post industrial disturbed or made-up ground</li> </ul>
Heath	The Brecks - Heathland and Plantations  The Brecks - Plantations	Rolling Coastal Heath and Arable	Heathland
Parkland/ Estate	Wooded Slopes with Estate Land	Wooded with Parkland	N/A
Coastal	Coastal Slopes	Coastal Plain	Coastal Strip
	Drained Coastal Marshes	Drained Marsh	N/A
	Open Coastal Marshes	Coastal Fen Undrained Marsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuarine Marshland</li> <li>• Relic Estuary</li> </ul>

## 2.4 Taking Things Forward

2.4.1 The following issues have been highlighted by the review of existing assessments. These issues will need to be addressed in developing a LCA methodology that can be consistently applied by planning authorities within the Norfolk AONB, and potentially across Norfolk if required.

### *Issue 1 – Integration of ecological and historic data*

2.4.2 Table 1 illustrates that to date Ecological Network Mapping or Historic Landscape Characterisation information has not as yet been fully integrated into published LCAs that relate wholly or partially to the AONB. This is mainly due to the lack of available information at the time of preparation. However, the integration of ENM information has recently been piloted for the North Norfolk District, and incorporated into the 2006 King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough assessment's landscape character types. Available HLC datasets, basic historic asset data and local knowledge has been incorporated into assessments for North Norfolk, King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough and The Broads to some degree.

2.4.3 In future, as more information becomes available, there will be a need to ensure the consistent integration of this data. There is therefore a need to set out best practice in achieving this and in particular retro-fitting assessment if necessary as and when feasible. In particular assessments should reflect the integration of HLC and ENM in a consistent way in terms of how data is used, descriptions are written and data is presented (refer to Sections 3.0 and 4.0 of this report for further details).

### *Issue 2 – Definition of Landscape Character Types and Areas*

2.4.4 Table 1 illustrates that all assessments undertaken to date have identified landscape types but only a few have also identified character areas as well. Also in some assessments detailed written descriptions relate to types whereas in others the detailed written descriptions relate to areas. Although there is no one way of undertaking an LCA, experience indicates that types are useful in developing land management guidelines whereas areas are useful in defining local distinctiveness and determining appropriateness of development and change.

2.4.5 Consideration needs to be given to the approach set out in the forthcoming King's Lynn & West Norfolk assessment as a standard approach to be replicated in other administrative

areas. This would require assessments such as the North Norfolk LCA to be developed further e.g. the identification of local character areas and preparation of supporting written descriptions.

### *Issue 3 – Naming of Landscape Typologies*

- 2.4.6 Table 2 illustrates that there is clearly variety in the naming of landscape types. For example in the North Norfolk assessment the coast is called ‘Coastal Plain’ where as in The Broads assessment it is called ‘Coastal Strip’.
- 2.4.7 There is a need for a clearly defined typology within which assessments can sit and be developed in more detail ensuring consistency in naming, scale of mapping and relationship to adjacent administrative areas.

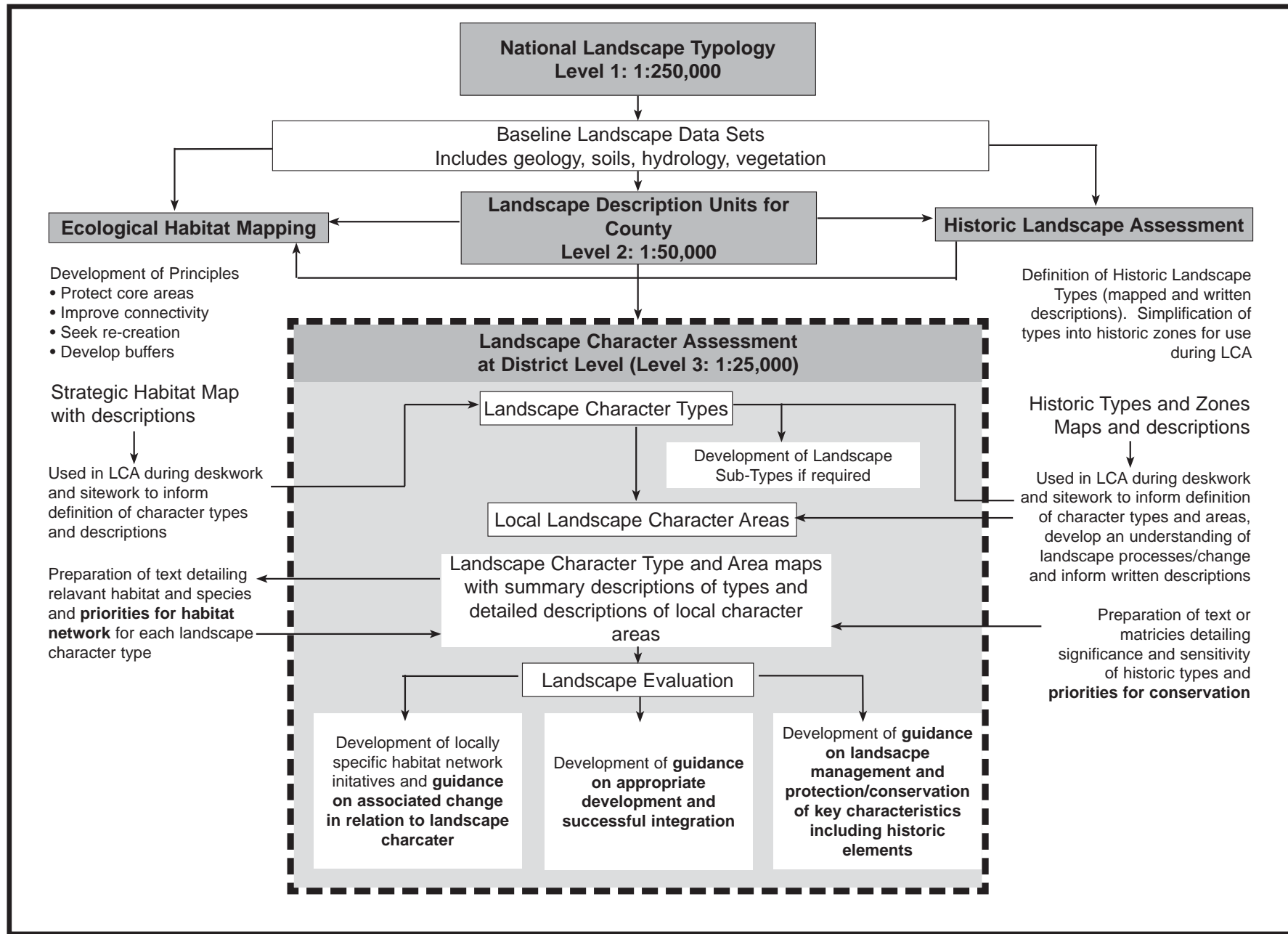
### *Issue 4 – Need for a Consistent Landscape Classification Hierarchy*

- 2.4.8 Table 2 also illustrates that although assessments have been carried out at the same scale i.e. 1:25,000, The Broads assessment has identified more detailed types than those found in the North Norfolk assessment. For example the landscape type 'Broads' in the North Norfolk assessment is subdivided into 'Broads', 'Carr Woodland' and 'Peat Fen' in The Broads assessment. In effect, The Broads types are in this case 'sub-types'. This is a reflection of the different level of detail that has been developed in each assessment and is perfectly acceptable as long as the sub-types nest within more general types. Developing sub-types where appropriate enables the assessment to be fit for purpose in each geographical area.
- 2.4.9 A 'tree' of types used within assessments in Norfolk needs to be developed so that it is clear how types within different assessment relate and 'nest' together. This would assist with the use of different assessment for AONB work but also with ensuring consistency between assessments across administrative boundaries. It is important that this desired consistency is not achieved at the expense of masking subtleties of local distinctiveness essential to informing judgements about the development and management of land.

### *Issue 5 – Developing a Consistent Approach to Integrated LCA at the District Level*

- 2.4.10 There is a clear need to develop a consistent approach to integrated LCA at the district level to encourage adoption of similar methodologies between districts. **Figure 1**, which sets out a model for integrated LCA at the district scale, shows how this level relates to and is informed by the overall assessment hierarchy, and identifies the stages where ENM and HLC data should be integrated into a level 3 LCA.







### **3.0 REVIEW OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION**



### 3.0 REVIEW OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

#### 3.1 Definition of Historic Landscape Characterisation

3.1.1 Historic landscape characterisation (HLC) is the process by which data on the material remains of the past is collated and presented to allow an understanding of the evolution of the present day landscape.

#### 3.2 Key Things to Know About the Process

##### *What does HLC do?*

3.2.1 Current guidance on HLC and its relationship with LCA is set out in Topic Paper 5: Understanding Historic Landscape Character<sup>5</sup>. HLC does not aim to plot the components of the landscape but to map a generalised depiction of its overall historic landscape character. As such it employs a common language with LCA and defines historic landscape types.

3.2.2 HLC is used to:

- Determine the "time-depth" of the landscape i.e. the visible evidence in the landscape for change and continuity over periods of time.
- Interpret the composite historic character of the present day landscape (not merely those aspects depicted on historic maps from specific periods)
- Define and describe the historic landscape of all areas not just the best or most intact/significant.
- Classify the landscape into different historic types related to age, origin, land use such as woodland, designed parkland or 20<sup>th</sup> century field enclosure pattern. Types may also be simplified to form more generalised types (these may be called zones, groups or categories). The latter simplified types are often more easily incorporated into an LCA than the detailed types although this does depend on the level of detailed the LCA is being carried out at.
- Classify previous episodes of landscape i.e. relic landscapes which help to unravel how a landscape has formed. This may reveal that one area of rough ground may have a different origin to another area of rough ground, despite the fact these areas may appear very similar in terms of present day character.

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<sup>5</sup> Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, Topic Paper 5: Understanding Historic Landscape Character. The Countryside Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and English Heritage.

- Measure recent change in the landscape i.e. significant loss of components.
- Assist in the management of change to historic environment at a landscape scale.

3.2.3 HLC does not usually attempt to define historic landscape areas (similar to landscape character areas). HLC defines types which may be simplified into zones, groups or categories for use in integration with LCA.

#### *How is HLC Integrated?*

3.2.4 There is a close relationship between HLC and LCA not least because the HLC methodology is in part based on the LCA approach.

3.2.5 HLC can be integrated into LCA at the desk, field and write-up stages of an assessment.

#### *Desk study*

3.2.6 At the desk based assessment historic landscape types and associated descriptions can inform variations which are likely to be expressed between different areas and provide insight into the origins of different areas. In this way HLC data helps to inform and shape preliminary landscape character areas and types. HLC may also be used to develop site survey sheets ensuring checklists of relevant historic landscape types and their characteristics (elements and patterns) are included as part of the things to record.

#### *Field Survey*

3.2.7 During field work HLC is integrated through the use of the field survey sheets. Checklists in the survey sheets raise the awareness of the landscape assessor to historic aspects of the landscape and enable the recording of historic patterns and elements which contribute to landscape character. HLC is invaluable when dealing with subtle lowland landscapes where variations in character may be difficult to discern. In these circumstances HLC may help in the identification of local character areas whose distinctiveness is derived by subtle cultural heritage patterns.

#### *Write-up*

3.2.8 During the write-up stage of assessment information gathered in the field along with further reference to the HLC maps and historic type descriptions can be used to inform the

descriptions of landscape character areas and types. Description should seek to describe how the character of the landscape seen today has been created e.g. *'the character of this landscape is defined by two main factors, its topography - large expansive open gently rolling or undulating land - and its historical landownership - large holdings since the mid eighteenth century<sup>6</sup>'*. It is important to avoid generalised statements about an areas long history, previous mixed uses or detailed statistics about the number of sheep that grazed an area or the number of people who lived there for example unless this is directly relevant to how the landscape looks today. The key is to keep the descriptions relevant to present day character i.e. to explain why a landscape looks the way it does.

3.2.9 Similarly, descriptions which list the number of scheduled monuments or other cultural heritage sites (perhaps from reference to the Historic Environment Record) do not fully integrate cultural heritage into LCA because they reflect only site based data rather than cultural heritage at a landscape scale (i.e. HLC) and do not assist fully in describing the origins of a landscape and the reasons for its present day character or patterns. Information on existing designations may however supplement HLC and provide useful background data which assists in the development of appropriate management guidelines at a later stage in the assessment process. They therefore should not be ignored altogether.

3.2.10 In assessments at the district level it is common practice to define landscape character areas and types and for the areas to be described in detail. In contrast the landscape character types may be described in a more general way and often in tabular format. In these circumstances it is appropriate to ensure that the landscape character area written descriptions include a section on cultural heritage with incorporates information from HLC. As noted above HLC can be invaluable when defining local character areas in subtle lowland landscapes. If this is the case then this needs to come across in the written description. The following checklist may help in the preparation of written descriptions:

- What are the main historic features and patterns in this landscape and how did they arise?
- Are there any notable relationships between features for example vernacular architecture, settlements and field patterns or woodland and topography?
- What have been the main changes in this landscape over time and when/how did they come about?
- Is this a landscape with a strong intact pattern from a particular period in history or a collection of different overlaying patterns?

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<sup>6</sup> Landscape Character Assessment for North Norfolk District Council Local Development Framework: Draft Version.

- If it is a collection of overlaying patterns are there certain features or patterns from a specific period which read most strongly?
- Do the historic features or patterns have a particular statutory value?

3.2.11 HLC is not just relevant to LCA but may also be integrated with ecological network mapping. HLC provides information on how a landscape has been formed and if information on 'relic landscapes' i.e. land uses or habitats which have been masked by more recent land uses is provided, it can help to determine the scope for 're-creation'.

### **3.4 Historic Landscape Characterisation in Norfolk**

3.4.1 An historic landscape character assessment is being undertaken for the whole of Norfolk County (see Appendix A for a summary of the project). This work is currently behind schedule, and is ongoing in that historic types are still being mapped including both current historic landscape types and relic types.

3.4.2 It is currently understood<sup>7</sup> that the HLC mapping the preparation of written descriptions of types is due to be completed by the end of August 2007. Following this it is intended that the historic landscape types are simplified to create historic landscape zones. These zones are likely to be the most useful scale for the integration of HLC into LCA.

3.4.3 The HLC has been informed by a wide variety of datasets including ancient woodland and deer parks. An outline of the datasets used can be found in the Project Design (see **Appendix A** for more details).

3.4.4 HLC has not been fully available for the assessments which have been undertaken in Norfolk to date. However the King's Lynn & West Norfolk, The Broads and North Norfolk assessments have had access to specialist advice and some limited HLC datasets/heritage asset mapping. This means that an understanding of the historical dimension of the landscape has found its way into these assessments, although there is some variation in terms of extent of integration and presentation of data.

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<sup>7</sup> Pers Comm from David Gurney, Principal Archaeologist, Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service, dated 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006



### 3.5 Taking Things Forward

- 3.5.1 The fact that HLC is being carried out at a county scale will ensure consistency of assessment across the planning authorities within Norfolk (and with adjacent counties); however, true compatibility between LCAs will depend upon how this information is subsequently incorporated into each character assessment.
- 3.5.2 It should be noted that, to date, none of the existing LCAs have been able to fully incorporate HLC data into their assessments because the complete set of HLC datasets and accompanying descriptions are not due to be completed until August 2007. Looking to the future, it will be important for this data to be incorporated in a consistent way and in a manner that enables it to be retro-fitted to assessments that have already been completed.
- 3.5.3 **Figure 1** (see Section 2.0) sets out a model for integrated LCA at the district level, and shows the stages where HLC should be integrated into a LCA. Whether HLC is integrated at the time an LCA is carried out or as a 'retro-fit' exercise the principles and approach to integration set out above still apply. Where it is retro-fitted the descriptive text should be developed to explain the origins of present day character and may perhaps in some subtle lowland landscapes result in the subdivision of local character areas. During a retro-fit it will be important to undertake some further site work armed with the HLC data and to combine this with deskwork before descriptions and subsequent management guidance are reworked.



## **4.0 REVIEW OF ECOLOGICAL NETWORK MAPPING**



## **4.0 REVIEW OF ECOLOGICAL NETWORK MAPPING**

### **4.1 Definition of Ecological Network Mapping**

4.1.1 Ecological network mapping (ENM) is a technique for presenting an overview of biodiversity opportunities at a landscape scale.

4.1.2 Ecological (or biodiversity) network maps are spatially-based tools which identify existing areas of biodiversity value (e.g. SSSIs), as well as areas where different types of habitat enhancement and re-creation could be delivered in the future in order to enhance connectivity.

### **4.2 Key Things to Know About the Process**

#### *What does Ecological Network Mapping do?*

4.2.1 It is now recognised that designated sites such as SSSIs cannot be maintained in favorable condition if they exist as isolated sites. Many species are dependent on mosaics of habitats across wide areas and depend upon well connected patches of semi-natural habitat in the landscape for feeding, nesting and shelter. Increasingly, habitat fragmentation is negatively impacting on the ability of wildlife to survive in the long term. For example, isolated areas of habitat may become too small to support viable populations of a particular species; small areas of habitat are also at greater risk from catastrophic events such as fire or flood and are also more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The appreciation of landscape scale ecological functions and processes has resulted in a move away from site-based biodiversity conservation towards a landscape scale approach.

4.2.2 Techniques emerging from landscape ecology highlight the importance of considering landscapes as a whole and particularly the connectivity of habitats. Ecological network mapping addresses this gap through the development of ecological network maps which define core areas, corridors and enhancement zones. These aim to provide the physical conditions necessary for ecosystems and species populations to survive in a human-dominated landscape.

4.2.3 To be effective ENM needs to link with existing mechanisms for realising landscape change and management. Landscape Character Assessment is an established framework for the conservation and enhancement at a landscape scale and has been used for many years in the

development and implementation of agri-environmental schemes. LCA can act as an integrating tool that provides a shared framework for the management or planning of landscapes and biodiversity.

### *How is ENM Integrated?*

4.2.4 Ecological Network Maps are increasingly being generated at the county level. One of the first areas of integrating ENM and landscape character comes at this early stage. Many County ENM projects now use Landscape Description Units (LDU's – see Section 2.2 for details) as one of a number of digital data sets within a GIS. Similarly there are strong parallels and overlap with the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) process set out in section 3.0. HLC can identify and highlight past landscapes and habitats which help to build up a picture of the extent of a former habitat such as heathland or to explain how one area has had a different evolution from another despite the fact that visually they look the same today. Thus the integration of the LDUs and HLC in preparing an ENM can assist in building up an 'opportunity' map or vision for environmental enhancement ensuring that the map has already taken into account variations in landscape character and historic evolution to some degree.

4.2.5 When undertaking a fine grained Landscape Character Assessment at District level the preparation of detailed management and planning guidance is a common final output. Landscape Character Assessment can help to guide biodiversity planning, refining the ecological network map and making it applicable to different geographical areas. LCA provides character descriptions and a spatial framework for habitat-creation targeting and the design of ecological networks. LCA should not limit the choice of habitats suitable for creation but provide a potential focus for targeting conservation resources. To achieve gains in biodiversity it is necessary to agree shared visions for targeting conservation and agri-environment resources.

### *Desk Study*

4.2.6 As indicated above the ENM uses digital mapping techniques for collating and analysing environmental datasets to plan habitat conservation, restoration and (re)creation at a landscape scale. The resulting map can be overlaid with other baseline information at the desk study stage to help in the preliminary definition of landscape character types and areas. This information along with geology, soils, landform etc provides a strategic overview of ecological potential for the creation of different habitat types.

*Fieldwork*

- 4.2.7 During the fieldwork stage the ENM can be used to highlight where there are ecological opportunities and what implications there may be for management and habitat creation initiatives. Reference to the ENM in relation to character areas and types is appropriate.

*Write-up*

- 4.2.8 At this stage in the process the ENM data can once again be overlain with the final landscape character areas and types and can assist in the development of written descriptions and appropriate landscape management initiatives and in guiding change. In these circumstances a detailed understanding of landscape character can help to provide a useful tool to gauge the appropriateness of habitat creation.
- 4.2.9 Traditionally landscape character assessments have included the development of landscape guidelines which reflect good practice in the conservation and management of landscape features or habitats of significance. Now with information on BAP targets and ENM there is an opportunity for LCA to integrate biodiversity more fully including reference to the creation of habitats, corridors or buffers. In doing so it also raises opportunities for potential conflicts with existing landscape character and the development of landscape character guidelines will need to address this in setting out priorities and guidance.
- 4.2.10 Bringing together ecological mapping and landscape character assessment helps to address the natural cross over between these two subject areas. Ultimately it requires the opportunities for biodiversity to be highlighted and to ensure that they are appropriate to the landscape character and the retention of local distinctiveness. Many believe that there is little conflict between these objectives and that the visual cohesion of characteristic landscape elements goes hand-in-hand with ecological integrity. Nevertheless there are examples of where ecological initiatives to restore a past habitat may result in conflict with existing character e.g. the clearance of wet woodland in order to achieve an area of reed bed. It is therefore important that at the final stages of the LCA process where guidelines are being prepared, initiatives to help create the ENM are prioritised and any conflicts acknowledged and addressed.

- 4.2.11 Recent work in Herefordshire has achieved this through the use of the ENM to define primary, secondary and tertiary or feature habitats for each LCT. It then went on to define priority management such as maintain, restore, create or review.

#### **4.4 Ecological Network Mapping in Norfolk**

- 4.4.1 The North Norfolk pilot has demonstrated the ease with which biodiversity habitat mapping data can be integrated into LCA though the use of landscape types as a framework. In this work the ENM data was used along with information on BAP targets and existing nature conservation designations. For each character type the existing nature conservation designations were described along with core areas of semi-natural habitat. Then priorities for habitat creation were set out with reference to the ENM and historic data. Opportunities for buffering and connecting sites were also described and geographically specific areas identified. Finally BAP species were listed and the habitats they require highlighted.
- 4.4.2 The biodiversity mapping has not utilised the HLC data to date because it is currently not available. The HLC data however offers considerable scope for informing opportunities for the re-creation of grassland habitats as it is likely to provide information on past land uses and in particular the existence of past commons, greens and waste.
- 4.4.3 The Norfolk county level ENM is currently being refined at the district level. It is intended that ENMs will be developed for each local authority area at a scale of 1:25,000 in the near future.

#### **4.5 Taking Things Forward**

- 4.5.1 There are two key issues with the integration of ENM into LCA.

##### ***Relating ENM data to landscape character units***

- 4.5.2 This issue is concerned with whether landscape character types or areas have been defined in the District assessment and whether the development of landscape management guidelines and initiatives relates to the areas or types. Ultimately there should be consistency across the assessments so that the development of land management guidelines incorporating ENM data is compatible relating to areas or type but not a combination of the two. Naturally there is a greater correlation between habitat types and landscape types but this natural correlation



does not preclude the development of management initiatives and management guidelines (based on the ENM) in relation to landscape areas when it comes to the write up process.

***Relating ENM data to landscape objectives/guidelines***

- 4.5.3 There is a need to develop the ENM data within LCAs at the judgement stage - i.e. to resolve the conflicts between habitat recreation priority and conservation of landscape character. This can be done at the stage of developing landscape objectives/guidelines. For example if woodland creation is identified as a priority for creation then the LCA should enable a refinement to this initiative by describing the extent and location of planting to ensure reinforcement of existing landscape character if this is desirable.
- 4.5.4 **Figure 1** (see Section 2.0) sets out a model for integrated LCA at the district level, and shows the stages where ENM should be integrated into a LCA. Whether ENM is integrated at the time an LCA is carried out or as a 'retro-fit' exercise the principles and approach to integration set out above still apply. Where it is retro-fitted the descriptive text should be developed to explain the biodiversity characteristics of an area and may perhaps in some circumstance result in the subdivision of local character areas/types. During a retro-fit it will be important to undertake some further site work armed with the ENM data and to combine this with deskwork before descriptions and subsequent management guidance are reworked.



## **5.0 REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE POLICY FRAMEWORK**



## 5.0 REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 5.1 General

- 5.1.1 New arrangements for the planning system in England and Wales are set out in the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*. This reform of the planning system is gradually replacing the current system of regional planning guidance and structure, local and unitary development plans, with a new two-tier system comprising regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks. Government is also preparing new Planning Policy Statements, updating the old style Planning Policy Guidance notes.
- 5.1.2 Under the provisions of the Act, Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) are replacing Regional Planning Guidance, providing a new statutory framework for the spatial integration of economic, environmental, community and transport objectives at the regional and sub-regional level. The RSS will also set out clear sub-regional priorities and policies to address key strategic issues or resources to inform the preparation of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) at district, borough and unitary authority level.
- 5.1.3 LDFs are gradually replacing local and unitary plans under the arrangements of the Act. LDFs comprise a series of Local Development Documents (LDDs) that set out proposals for the future development use and conservation of land and buildings. The Core Strategy, Development Control Policies, Site Specific Allocations, Proposals Map and any Area Action Plans, together with the RSS, comprise the statutory Development Plan Documents (DPDs) against which all planning decisions will normally need to be made. A summary of the LDDs that can make up an LDF is set out in Appendix C.
- 5.1.4 In this context, a review of the current state of the planning policy framework for AONBs and landscape character is set out below. The review considers the following key sources of policy:
- The European Landscape Convention
  - National Planning Policy
  - The Regional Spatial Strategy
  - Management Plans for Protected Landscapes
  - Local Development Frameworks

## 5.2 The European Landscape Convention

- 5.2.1 The UK Government signed the European Landscape Convention in 2006<sup>8</sup>. 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. The Convention encourages public authorities to emphasise the importance of promoting people's engagement with and enjoyment of the landscape around them.

## 5.3 National Planning Policy

- 5.3.1 National planning policy relating to protection and enhancement of AONBs and the importance of landscape character and role of LCA approaches is contained in PPS1<sup>9</sup> and PPS7<sup>10</sup>.

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

- 5.3.2 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). It confirms the Government's commitment to protection and enhancement of the natural environment, stating that natural resources '*with national and international designations should receive the highest level of protection*' (para 17). 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).

<sup>8</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>9</sup> Planning Policy Statement 1 : Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Planning Policy Statement 7 : Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (ODPM, 2004).

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

- 5.3.3 PPS7 sets out the Government's objectives for rural areas, confirming as a key objective that *'continued protection of the open countryside for the benefit of all, with the highest level of protection for our most valued landscapes and environmental resources'* [objective (i)]. Paragraph 21 confirms that AONBs enjoy such status. Paragraph 22 states that *'major developments should not take place in these designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances.'* PPS7 gives weight to the *'conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside'*. It also requires local authorities to *'support suitable located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of these designated areas and their communities'* (para 21).
- 5.3.4 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 LDDs 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).

## **5.4 The Regional Spatial Strategy**

- 5.4.1 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>11</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. The Draft RSS contains a range of policies requiring action by local planning authorities.
- 5.4.2 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

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<sup>11</sup> The East of England Plan: Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (December 2004)

account the recommended changes of the EIP Panel, draft Policy ENV2 Landscape Conservation states:

*‘Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and programmes and decision-making 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 (having status equal to a National Park) and the Chilterns, Norfolk Coast, Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast and Heaths Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)s. Within The Broads priority will be given to the statutory purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, promoting public enjoyment and protecting the interests of navigation. Within the AONBs priority over other considerations will be given to conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.*

*Throughout the East of England planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies, programmes and decision-making will aim to recognise, protect and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of the countryside character areas indicated on Map 9.1 by:*

- \* developing area-wide strategies, based on landscape character assessments, setting long-term goals for landscape change, targeting planning and land management tools and resources to influence that change, and giving priority to those areas subject to most growth and change;*
- \* developing criteria-based policies, informed by the area-wide strategies and landscape character assessments, to ensure that all development, wherever possible respects and enhances local landscape character; and*
- \* providing/requiring appropriate mitigation measures where avoidance of damage to local landscape character is unavoidable.’*

## **5.5 Management Plans for Protected Landscapes**

### ***The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan<sup>12</sup>***

5.5.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act<sup>13</sup> places a duty on relevant authorities (those having land within an AONB) to have regard to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. The Act also requires relevant local authorities to participate in the preparation and publication of a management plan for the AONB. The Management Plan is not a statutory development plan. However, it is a material consideration to planning and land use decisions affecting the AONB.

5.5.2 The Plan sets out a number of agreed policies for the management of the AONB. These include policies seeking to use the management plan to inform statutory and non-statutory guidance that relate to its management; policies to ensure a recognition and consideration of

<sup>12</sup> The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2004-2009

<sup>13</sup> Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)



the AONB and its natural beauty; co-ordinate long-term planning and policies; and consider the potential effects of all proposed initiatives on the AONB, in particular landscape impacts. The plan policies also seek to use existing statutory plans and powers in managing change to move towards the agreed aim and vision for the future of the AONB.

- 5.5.3 The Management Plan also sets out five-year objectives for the AONB. These include seeking to ensure that the special qualities of the AONB are considered in planning and development control in a consistent manner, and promoting further agreed guidance as necessary to provide a comprehensive framework for the co-ordinated management of the natural beauty of the area.

### *The Broads Management Plan*<sup>14</sup>

- 5.5.4 The preparation of The Broads Management Plan is a statutory requirement under The Broads Act; however, it is not a statutory planning document. It sets out a vision, long-term 20 year aims and 5 year priority objectives for the future of The Broads. The current Plan was adopted in February 2004.
- 5.5.5 The Plan recognises that The Broads is a living and working landscape and sets out the 20 year aim of understanding, retaining and reinforcing the key physical and cultural elements of the landscape character, whilst providing for change to reflect the interactions between people and nature. In terms of development, the Plan seeks to maintain The Broads as a unique and special landscape and to promote a planning policy framework for economically and environmentally sustainable development that will underpin a thriving community.

## **5.6 Local Development Frameworks**

- 5.6.1 The four planning authorities within the AONB (King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council, North Norfolk District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and The Broads Authority) have prepared and adopted local plans for the whole of their areas to guide development and to protect and enhance the environment. The current local plan policies in relation to countryside protection, AONB, landscape character and design for each of the respective authority areas is set out in **Appendix D**. Under the new Planning Act, these authorities are currently carrying out preparation work for the new LDFs. The review set out below therefore examines the emerging approaches to AONB and landscape character policy formulation within these LDFs.

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<sup>14</sup> The Broads Management Plan (2004)

## ***King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council***

### *Current LDF Situation*

- 5.6.2 The Council has published an LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper<sup>15</sup>. Public consultation has been carried with comments invited on the Preferred Options in order to help influence the content of the final document which will be submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2007.

### *AONB Policy Approach*

- 5.6.3 There is no specific preferred option in relation to protection and enhancement of the AONB, although the AONB is referred to in the supporting text to Preferred Policy Option 45.

### *Landscape Character Policy Approach*

- 5.6.4 The Paper notes the importance of protecting and enhancing the environment from development likely to have adverse effects on the landscape's visual amenity and environmental value. It sets out a preferred policy option for protecting and enhancing the landscape. This generally aims to develop policies in the new LDF that protect and enhance the Borough's landscapes, reflect the character of rural areas, encourage a high quality of design in new development. The preferred policy option states:

#### *'45. Preferred Policy Option: Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape*

##### *Policies in the plan will:*

- *Protect the distinctive character or appearance of the landscape.*
- *Protect and enhance landscape features such as trees, woodlands, orchards, hedgerows, heath lands, lakes, ponds, streams, commons, fen reclamation banks and salterns.*
- *Seek to protect parks and gardens valued for their historic characteristics from development which would have an adverse affect on their integrity.*
- *Promote good standards of building design and landscaping which contribute to the visual amenities of the landscape and respect nature conservation interests, and restore and create new habitats in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan priorities.*
- *Encourage an increase in woodland cover and planting of native trees in small and large scale development which respects and enhances local landscape character.*
- *Promote and encourage the expansion of agri-environment schemes to increase the landscape, historic and wildlife value of farmland.*
- *Ensure that development in rural areas is carefully planned to avoid adverse impacts in the countryside.'*

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<sup>15</sup> King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper (September 2006)

### *Key Issues*

5.6.5 The key issues for this study to consider are:

- No specific preferred option in relation to protection and enhancement of the AONB.
- The policy approach gives regard to wider landscapes, and the protection and enhancement of the character of all landscapes in the Borough.

### *North Norfolk District Council*

#### *Current LDF Situation*

5.6.6 The Council has recently consulted on Preferred Options Papers for the LDF Core Strategy and Site Specific Proposals DPDs. The Core Strategy Paper<sup>16</sup> sets out LDF aims that seek to protect and enhance the distinctive character of the countryside, and protect, restore and enhance North Norfolk's landscape and biodiversity.

#### *General Countryside Protection Policy Approach*

5.6.7 The preferred option is set out in full below:

##### *'EN 1 - Conserving and enhancing North Norfolk's natural and built environment*

*Areas of landscape or biodiversity interest will be protected from harm, and the restoration, enhancement, expansion and linking of these areas will be encouraged through a variety of measures such as:*

- *the designation of Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites;*
- *appropriate management of valuable areas, such as County Wildlife Sites;*
- *minimising the fragmentation of habitats, creation of new habitats and connection of existing areas to create an ecological network;*
- *progress towards Biodiversity Action Plan targets; and*
- *conservation and enhancement of SSSI's in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act.*

*Where there is no conflict with biodiversity interests the enjoyment and use of the natural environment will be encouraged and all proposals should seek to incorporate:*

- *adequate landscaping and natural areas;*
- *increased public access to the countryside;*

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<sup>16</sup> North Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options Development Plan Document (September 2006)

- *creation of convenient and attractive links and networks between development and the surrounding area; and*
- *links to strategic walking and cycling routes*

*The built environment will be conserved and enhanced through protection of existing assets and encouragement of high quality sensitive design in new development.'*

#### *AONB Policy Approach*

- 5.6.8 The preferred option EN2 seeks to ensure that the prime consideration within the AONB will be its conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty. The preferred option is set out in full below:

*'Preferred Option EN 2 - Nationally designated areas: The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*

*The prime consideration within the Norfolk Coast AONB will be the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Proposals should seek to enhance the special qualities of this area and opportunities for remediation should be taken when they arise. The impact of individual proposals, and the cumulative effect of development, will be carefully assessed.*

*Major developments and those causing significant adverse effects should only take place in the AONB in exceptional circumstances. These proposals should be demonstrated to be in the public interest before being allowed to proceed and include an assessment of the need for the development, the scope for development elsewhere outside the designated area and mitigation of any detrimental effects.'*

#### *Landscape Character Policy Approach*

- 5.6.9 The preferred policy option EN3 specifically seeks to require development to conserve and where possible enhance the quality and distinctive character of landscape types identified in the District Landscape Character Assessment. It also seeks to protect the setting of areas designated for their landscape and appearance and locally designated areas of undeveloped coast. The preferred option is set out in full below:

*'Preferred Option EN 3 - Landscape Protection*

*Development and other schemes will only be permitted if they conserve, and where possible enhance, the quality and distinctive character of the particular landscape type within which they are located, as described in the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment.*

*The Landscape Character Assessment will inform detailed assessment of individual proposals and all schemes should protect and enhance overall landscape character - taking account of the key characteristics, distinctiveness and sensitivity of the landscape - and the landscape setting of settlements.*

*The setting of areas designated for their appearance and landscape importance. The setting of, and views from, the Norfolk Coast AONB, The Broads, Conservation Areas and historic parks and gardens will be protected and proposals should minimise the impact on these areas.*

*An area of Undeveloped Coast will be designated as an area where its open and coastal character should be protected and proposals will need to demonstrate that an inland location is not possible and that a coastal location is essential. Any proposals within this area must also accord with other policies in the Core Strategy.'*

#### *Key Issues*

5.6.10 The key issues for this study to consider are:

- Comprehensive approach taken to protection and enhancement of the AONB and the wider landscape
- Clearly defined links made to the role of the Landscape Character Assessment.

#### ***Great Yarmouth Borough Council***

##### *Current LDF Situation*

5.6.11 The Council's LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Paper<sup>17</sup> was published in August 2006 for public consultation. The Council's proposed approach to the AONB and landscape is set out in proposed policies CS1, CS6 and CS17.

##### *Sustainable Development Policy Approach*

5.6.12 The preferred option is set out below:

##### *'Policy CS1 Sustainable Development*

*All proposals for the development and use of land must be sustainable. To ensure sustainability, proposals will be assessed in terms of the Borough's identified needs and their potential impact on communities and the environment. Development will be supported where it is demonstrated that the following criteria have been taken into account and where appropriate measures are provided. New development should [inter alia]:*

- i. conserve and enhance buildings, sites and places of historic, archaeological or architectural importance;*

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<sup>17</sup> Great Yarmouth LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Paper (August 2006)

- j. *conserve and enhance valued open spaces, the character and quality of local landscapes and the wider countryside;*
- k. *conserve and enhance biodiversity, wildlife habitats and species...*

*These criteria will be used to assess development proposals. Applicants and developers will be expected to demonstrate that they have been taken into account and may be required to submit a sustainability statement alongside a planning application, at a level of detail reflecting the scale of development. This will be in addition to an Environmental Impact Assessment, where it is required by legislation.'*

#### *Design Policy Approach*

5.6.13 The preferred option is set out in full below:

#### *'Policy CS6 Promoting Design Quality*

*The Borough Council will encourage good quality design which provides usable, durable and adaptable places, secures the efficient use of land by building to higher densities and protects and enhances the form, local character and distinctiveness of Great Yarmouth Borough's built and natural environment. New development will be required to:*

- a. *reflect a clear understanding of the local physical, social, economic and environmental context for the proposed development;*
- b. *provide for a compatible mix of uses where appropriate, particularly in town and village centres and main movement routes;*
- c. *help secure a hierarchy of usable spaces providing for all ages and accessible to all, including people with disabilities;*
- d. *provide developments offering real transport choice, favouring walking, cycling and public transport;*
- e. *provide streets that are safe spaces for all users;*
- f. *integrate with existing routes to provide linked up places connecting with the wider area, in particular public facilities;*
- g. *provide for the needs of all including the young, elderly and people with disabilities;*
- h. *create safe places through the adoption of designing-out-crime principles to provide natural surveillance, visibility, and well lit environments;*
- i. *provide clearly defined public and private realms with active frontages which reinforce and define streets and public spaces;*
- j. *incorporate comprehensive landscaping within and around the development appropriate to the scale and impact of the development;*
- k. *secure the retention of features of biodiversity interest including habitats, buffer areas and wildlife corridors;*
- l. *maximize energy efficiency through siting and design, and the use of sustainable materials;*
- m. *incorporate renewable energy facilities and energy saving techniques;*
- n. *provide sustainable urban drainage systems where appropriate to limit waste water and water pollution and reduce flood risk;*
- o. *incorporate appropriate waste management and recycling facilities;*
- p. *foster a sense of place and reinforce local character and distinctiveness through appropriate design detailing, use of materials and provision for public art.*

*In developing their proposals the Borough Council will expect applicants to take account of Village Design Statements, Landscape Character Statements, Conservation Character Statements and other design statements illustrating important features of local distinctiveness. For major and sensitive developments applications should be supported by a Design Statement and BREEAM assessment to demonstrate environmental performance.'*

#### *AONB Policy Approach*

- 5.6.14 There is no specific policy proposed relating to the AONB, although the preferred approach in policy C17 (see below) requires protection and management of designated areas.

#### *Landscape Character Policy Approach*

- 5.6.15 The preferred approach set out in CS1 requires development to be sustainable, seeking to conserve and enhance the character and quality of local landscapes and the wider countryside. The proposed Policy CS6 promotes design quality and the protection and enhancement of local character and distinctiveness. This proposed policy also supports the use of local level initiatives such as Village Design Statements and Landscape Character Statements. Proposed policy CS17 seeks to conserve, protect, manage and enhance the natural environment, including sensitive landscapes and habitats and land on the urban fringe, and includes the intention to utilise landscape character assessment. This preferred policy approach is set out below:

#### *'Policy CS17 - Conserving, Protecting, Managing & Enhancing the Natural Environment*

*Natural environment will be conserved, protected, managed and enhanced in order to underpin the overall quality of life of the Borough as a living environment and support wider social and economic sustainability objectives. This will be achieved by:*

- a. protecting and managing designated nature, conservation and other environmental assets within the Borough and the neighbouring Broads Area;*
- b. maximising the use of previously developed land to minimise encroachment onto Greenfield sites;*
- c. providing for the effective management of land on the fringes of urban and village built up areas through landscape character assessments;*
- d. preventing, reducing or remedying all forms of pollution including water, soil, air and noise;*
- e. protecting the Borough's biodiversity of flora and fauna, sensitive landscapes and habitats and promoting their enhancement;*
- f. protecting the Borough's geomorphologic assets and sensitive landscapes and promoting their enhancement;*

- g. *networks of natural habitats will be maintained and protected from development that would lead to their isolation or fragmentation.'*

#### *Key Issues*

5.6.16 The key issues for this study to consider are:

- The preferred policy approach does not specify that a policy will be included relating to the protection and enhancement of the AONB.
- The approach makes links to a proposed LCA
- The importance of conserving and enhancing the quality and distinctive characteristics of the Borough's landscape character areas is strongly emphasised.

#### ***The Broads Authority***

##### *Current LDF Situation*

5.6.17 The Broads Authority submitted their LDF Core Strategy<sup>18</sup> to the Secretary of State on 29 September 2006. The approach taken by the Authority requires protection and enhancement of The Broads due to its status as equivalent to a National Park, but recognises the need to balance this with the needs of a living landscape, emphasising the social and economic value of the area.

##### *Landscape Character Policy Approach*

5.6.18 There is no specific reference in the Core Strategy to a specific policy for the small part of the AONB that falls within The Broads Authority area. This is because the whole of The Broads is a protected landscape and therefore a separate policy for the AONB is considered unnecessary by The Broads Authority.

##### *Landscape Character Policy Approach*

5.6.19 In accordance with the statutory purposes of the designation of The Broads as a nationally protected landscape and Government planning policy for National Parks in PPS7, a position of general restraint and landscape protection is the baseline of the Core Strategy. Policy CS1

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<sup>18</sup> Broads Authority Local Development Framework Core Strategy Submission Document (September 2006)



sets the context for identifying and protecting the key physical, cultural and perceptual resources which make up the protected landscape of The Broads.

*‘CS 1 - Landscape protection and enhancement*

*Development and changes in land use/management must ensure that all aspects of the environmental and cultural assets of The Broads’ distinctive landscape are protected, enhanced and restored.*

*Proposals should ensure opportunities for positive impacts on the following core assets have been addressed and adverse impacts avoided:*

- (i) the defining and distinctive qualities of the varied landscape character areas formed by the built and natural environment;*
- (ii) tranquillity and wildness as part of The Broads experience;*
- (iii) the value and integrity of nature conservation interest; and*
- (iv) the character, appearance and integrity of the historic and cultural environment.*

*Opportunities to mitigate the visual impact of currently intrusive features should be sought.’*

5.6.20 The overall approach is to utilise LCA information to inform criteria-based policies within the Development Control development plan document that will emerge later in the LDF formulation process. The thrust of the LDF policies is to require development to be designed to enhance the locally distinctive character of landscapes and settlements.

*Key Issues*

5.6.21 The key issues for this study to consider are;

- The overall approach to landscape protection and enhancement is underpinned by a strong LCA approach
- The landscape protection and enhancement policy CS1 seeks to incorporate historic and nature conservation considerations, an integrated approach to the landscape within the Authority area.



## **6.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY APPROACHES**



## **6.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY APPROACHES**

### **6.1 General**

6.1.1 The approach to formulation of AONB and landscape character policies in local development documents is considered below. This section also examines the need, benefits and scope of guidance on the treatment of landscape issues within planning decisions.

### **6.2 Landscape Policies in Local Development Documents**

6.2.1 Based on the framework outlined in Section 5.0, the focus of the current European, national and emerging regional planning policy framework in relation to the protection and enhancement of landscape can be summarised as:

- Sustainable development is the overarching objective and priority.
- The highest level of protection should continue to be afforded to protected landscapes such as The Broads and the Norfolk Coast AONB.
- Landscape character, settlement character and local distinctiveness should be taken into consideration in development.
- Landscape character should inform but not constrain development.
- The countryside is to be protected for its own sake but development that supports the rural economy should be considered.
- Core policies need to be clear, concise and criteria-based.
- A strong evidence base is required to support policies and any Supplementary Planning Documents.
- Local landscape designations (and green wedges/strategic gaps), where these are to be retained, need justification based on a formal and robust assessment.
- Design policy is an important means for achieving landscape character objectives.

#### ***AONB Policy***

6.2.2 The AONB policy needs to have regard to current national Planning Policy Statement 7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* (PPS7), which places great weight on the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty (which includes wildlife and cultural heritage as well as scenery) of the landscape in AONBs. AONBs are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and additional legal powers are contained in the Countryside and Rights of Way [CROW] Act 2000. The Norfolk Coast

AONB was designated in 1968 for its relatively undeveloped and unspoilt coastal character - the wild, rich and diverse mix of unusual coastal geomorphological features of sand and shingle spits and broad band of salt-marshes, set against the contrasting picturesque backdrop of distinctive rising wooded rolling hills, ridges and heathland that characterise the inland agricultural landscapes.

6.2.3 The CROW Act placed a statutory duty on local authorities to have regard to AONB purposes and prepare new management plans for them. As required by section 89 of the CROW Act, the *Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan 2004-2009* formulates local authority policies and action in relation to the management of the AONB. The Plan was adopted by the local authority organisations in the Norfolk Coast Partnership – Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council, King’s Lynn & West Norfolk, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and The Broads Authority. Planning policy should emphasise that this Plan will need to be taken into consideration in all development proposals within or close to the AONB. National policy states that major developments should not take place in AONBs, except in exceptional circumstances and sets out criteria by which to assess such proposals.

6.2.4 Taking into consideration the above context, a proposed AONB policy is set out in **Appendix E**. The wording of the policy reflects:

- PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas requirements
- PPS12 Local Development Frameworks advice
- The East of England Plan EIP Panel Report’s recommended Policy ENV2 Landscape Conservation requirements
- The Countryside Agency’s West Sussex Demonstration Project<sup>19</sup>
- Comments from the Steering Group on a first draft.

### ***Landscape Character Policy***

6.2.5 The Government acknowledges in PPS7<sup>20</sup> that there are areas of locally important landscape that are not nationally designated but need adequate protection (para 24). Recent research carried out for the Countryside Agency<sup>21</sup> notes that local landscape designations are generally successful in protecting areas of high local importance from development, but that

<sup>19</sup> Countryside Agency Demonstration Project - Criteria-based Landscape Policies and Guidance in Local Development Documents : an Approach in West Sussex, Report No.1 Policies (White Consultants, February 2006)

<sup>20</sup> Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (ODPM, 2004)

<sup>21</sup> Review of Local Landscape Designations (CBA for the Countryside Agency, June 2006)

they do not typically facilitate appropriate development or actively promote the enhancement of local character and distinctiveness within these areas.

- 6.2.6 PPS7 states that, with respect to highly valued local landscape areas, the Government *‘believes that carefully drafted, criteria-based policies in LDDs, utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, should provide sufficient protection for these areas, without the need for rigid local designations that may unduly restrict acceptable, sustainable development and the economic activity that underpins the vitality of rural areas’* (para 24). PPS7 also states that when compiling and reviewing LDDs local planning authorities *‘should rigorously consider the justification for retaining existing local landscape designations’* and that these *‘should only be maintained or, exceptionally, extended where it can be clearly shown that criteria-based planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection. LDDs should state what it is that requires extra protection, and why’* (para 25).
- 6.2.7 Whilst not explicitly ruling them out, the Draft RSS does not provide specific policy support for the retention of local landscape designations by local planning authorities in their LDDs. Policy ENV2 (Landscape Conservation) promotes the use of landscape character assessments as the basis for developing area-wide strategies for guiding the management of landscape change linked to the provision of appropriate criteria-based landscape policies in LDDs.
- 6.2.8 The review of proposed approaches to landscape policy formulation in LDFs (see Section 5.6) identified that the majority of the planning authorities are not intending to retain local landscape designations in their LDDs. Most indicate that their preferred approach is to rely on an over-arching criteria-based landscape character policy to provide the necessary protection (and enhancement) of these landscapes. This is consistent with approaches by a growing number of other local authorities in England where criteria-based landscape character policies, with supporting guidance, are replacing the traditional reliance on local landscape designations where these are considered to be too blunt an instrument for delivering sustainable development in landscape terms<sup>22</sup>.
- 6.2.9 In light of the above, there is a clear need to incorporate a criteria-based Landscape Character policy into the appropriate LDD of each district planning authority linked to and underpinned by a spatial/character area-based approach to landscape protection and

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<sup>22</sup> See for example - Countryside Agency Demonstration Project - Criteria-based Landscape Policies and Guidance in Local Development Documents : an Approach in West Sussex, Report No.1 Policies (White Consultants, February 2006)

enhancement. To be comprehensive, the wording of a Landscape Character policy and its supporting explanatory text should attempt to reflect the following main considerations:

- The need to recognise that landscape character is of fundamental importance to the quality of life for communities in all areas.
- High priority should be afforded to the protection, conservation and enhancement of landscape character in delivering sustainable development in line with Government policy.
- A clear definition of landscape character and local distinctiveness.
- The role of a Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document to provide guidance on how the overall character of each Landscape Character Unit identified in a Landscape Character Assessment can be protected, conserved and enhanced.
- The provision of other appropriate evidence bases related to understanding specific aspects of landscape character/geographical areas – such as tranquil areas, townscapes, settlement-edge landscapes, etc.
- The need to stress the importance of encouraging well-designed, high quality new development within rural areas that helps sustain and/or create places with a strong sense of place and local identity.
- Encouragement for landscape enhancement schemes, submission of a design statement with planning applications that fully address landscape considerations, and provision of landscape-scale management plans/strategies.

6.2.10 Taking the above into consideration, a proposed landscape character policy (and an alternative combined landscape and settlement character policy option) are set out in **Appendix E**. The wording of the policies reflect:

- PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas requirements
- PPS12 Local Development Frameworks advice
- The East of England Plan EIP Panel Report's recommended Policy ENV2 Landscape Conservation requirements
- The Countryside Agency's West Sussex Demonstration Project<sup>23</sup>
- Comments from the Steering Group on a first draft.

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<sup>23</sup> Countryside Agency Demonstration Project - Criteria-based Landscape Policies and Guidance in Local Development Documents : an Approach in West Sussex, Report No.1 Policies (White Consultants, February 2006)



6.2.11 It should be noted that the proposed model policies and their supporting explanatory text are not intended to be prescriptive. Elements of the proposed wording may require specific amendment(s) to reflect the specific circumstances and distinctive landscape characteristics of particular planning authority areas.

### **6.3 Landscape Character Guidance for Planners and Applicants**

6.3.1 To be effective in meeting the objectives of the AONB Management Plan, a consistent approach to the application of landscape protection and enhancement policies by the four planning authorities across the AONB is required. One way of achieving this is to develop a simple methodology or toolkit that could be considered for adoption by the relevant planning authorities as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support core and development control policies within their LDFs.

6.3.2 As advised by PPS12, SPDs are a material consideration in planning decisions and can therefore help to afford greater weight to landscape character protection and enhancement considerations through the planning process. The purpose of a Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document would be to:

- Provide concise and process-based guidance for development control planners and applicants on the use of LCA and other characterisation information (e.g. HLC data) to inform the criteria-based planning policies and guidance in LDDs.
- Promote consistent approaches to development control practice with regards to landscape issues within the local planning authority and between neighbouring local authorities.
- Provide a link between the Landscape Character Assessments that form the evidence base, and the core and development control LDD policies.
- Help integrate development planning with conservation and land management, in line with the requirements of PPS12<sup>24</sup>, by making the link between planning policy work and landscape management guidance for landowners and managers.

6.3.3 An example of this type of guidance has been recently piloted by High Peak Borough Council as a Countryside Agency Demonstration Project<sup>25</sup>. The High Peak Landscape Character SPD was developed to underpin the application of countryside development, landscape character and design policies in the High Peak Local Plan. The SPD, which is

<sup>24</sup> PPS12 Local Development Frameworks (ODPM, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> High Peak Borough Local Development Framework : Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document SPD5 (High Peak Borough Council, Adopted March 2006) – a Countryside Agency Demonstration Project.

approximately 50-60 pages in length, contains selected information from the High Peak Borough Landscape Character Assessment. The SPD is structured as shown in **Box 1**:

**Box 1 – Structure of the High Peak Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document**

- Introduction – 1 page
- How to use the SPD – 1 page
- Key LDD Landscape/Countryside Policies – 1 page
- Design in the Countryside – 1 page
- Biodiversity Conservation and Enhancement – 1 page
- Principles for Accommodating Large Scale Development – 1 page
- Sources of Information – 1 page
- Glossary of Terms – 1 page
- Landscape Character Types Map – 1 page
- Landscape Character Type Guidance - summarised from (and cross-referenced to) the Landscape Character Assessment document. The Guidance includes:
  - \* brief summary of landscape character
  - \* key landscape characteristics to consider
  - \* key sensitivities to consider
  - \* landscape strategy objectives
  - \* landscape planning guidelines
  - \* landscape management guidelines
- Illustrated design principles - for both small-scale and large-scale development in rural settlements for each of the Landscape Character Types, promoting sensitive siting, forms, details and landscaping of development schemes that protect and enhance the local character.

6.3.4 The Landscape Character SPD aims to ensure that future development responds to the landscape context including aspects of the traditional style so that it reinforces local distinctiveness. The SPD sets out four simple steps for planners and applicants to follow. These are shown in **Box 2**:

6.3.5 This type of toolkit of process-based guidance provides a useful model for developing a similar SPD for use by planning authorities within the Norfolk Coast Partnership.

## **Box 2 – Methodological Steps in the High Peak Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document**

### ***‘Step One***

*Find which Landscape Character Type the site is in using the map on page 11. Look at the section of the SPD that deals with that Landscape Character Type. Are there any points that are particularly relevant to your site or proposal?*

### ***Step Two***

*Look at your site and its wider landscape setting. Think about how best to fit the development into the local landscape. You may find it helpful to look at surrounding development, especially within the same Landscape Character Type, to see how it relates to the landscape. Some key questions to consider are:*

- ***Where on the site?***  
*What is the relationship of new development to the shape of the land? How does development relate to existing buildings, trees, habitats and other landscape features?*
- ***What shape of development?***  
*Consider the height, width and depth of new development and the shape of any enclosures.*
- ***What type of development detail?***  
*Consider the colours and textures of materials for the walls and roof of buildings and for hardstanding and other surfaces. Also consider the detailed design of buildings including the pattern and shape of windows and doors.*
- ***How to relate to the landscape setting?***  
*What types of boundaries will help to tie development into the landscape? Would appropriate tree planting or habitat creation help to link development to the wider landscape?*

### ***Step Three***

*Use the material in the SPD to help with any of the issues above. Not all of it will be relevant. Select relevant aspects from the guidance that can be used to help in the design of your proposal.*

### ***Step Four***

*Prepare your planning application, including plans and sketches. Demonstrate how you have considered the above issues in your design. A concept statement will help to summarise the key issues.’*



## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**



## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 General**

7.1.1 In line with the aims and objectives of the brief, this section sets out a series of recommendations for consideration by the Norfolk Coast Partnership.

### **7.2 Methodology for Integrated Landscape Character Assessment**

7.2.1 It is recommended that the planning authorities within the Norfolk Coast Partnership give consideration to adopting the proposed model for integrated landscape character assessment set out in Sections 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 of this report (and as summarised on Figure 1). This model provides a common methodology for integrating HLC and ENM data into the definition and descriptions of landscape character units. It is applicable to both assessments being carried out for the first time and for retro-fitting HLC/ENM data into an existing assessment as part of a review and updating process. To avoid confusion, agreeing a standardised terminology for the naming of landscape character types across the AONB (and ultimately the County) is a key next step for the Norfolk Coast AONB and Norfolk County Council to address.

7.2.2 The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Landscape Character Assessment undertaken by CBA provides an indicative template to guide assessment work by the other planning authorities within the AONB. However it should be noted that the HLC Project will not be complete until August 2007. It was therefore not possible to pilot the proposed methodology for integrating HLC data into the definition and description of landscape units within the King's Lynn and West Norfolk assessment. It is recommended that once the HLC data is available, the Norfolk Coast Partnership (with support from Natural England) gives consideration to identifying an opportunity to pilot the proposed approach as an integral part of an appropriate LCA project for a planning authority.

### **7.3 AONB and Landscape Character Policies**

#### ***AONB Policy***

7.3.1 For consistency of approach, it is recommended that the planning authorities within the Norfolk Coast Partnership give consideration to incorporating the proposed model AONB policy set out in **Appendix E** into their relevant LDDs. In line with the policy approach

taken by The Broads Authority in their submitted Core Strategy (see paras. 5.6.18 – 5.6.19), this recommendation would not apply to The Broads.

### ***Landscape Character Policy***

- 7.3.2 For consistency of approach, it is recommended that the planning authorities within the Norfolk Coast Partnership give consideration to incorporating the proposed model landscape character policy (or alternatively the combined landscape and settlement character policy) set out in **Appendix E** into their relevant LDDs. It should be noted that the proposed model policies and their supporting explanatory text are not intended to be prescriptive. Elements of the proposed wording may require specific amendment(s) to reflect the specific circumstances and distinctive landscape characteristics of particular planning authority areas.

## **7.4 Landscape Character Toolkit**

- 7.4.1 It is recommended that the local authorities within the Norfolk Coast Partnership give consideration to developing, perhaps jointly with neighbouring authorities, a Landscape Character Toolkit on a county-wide basis. This toolkit would provide guidance for development control planners and applicants on how to use LCA information to inform development proposals and assessment of planning applications. A potential model for a toolkit is set out in Section 6.3 for consideration.

## **7.5 Enhancing the Evidence Base**

- 7.5.1 The proposed AONB and landscape character policies seek to promote an integrated approach to understanding, planning and managing landscape within the Norfolk Coast AONB. This approach demands that the policies are supported by LCAs undertaken in accordance with the proposed methodology recommended in Section 7.1 above. The policies also seek to incorporate a range of specific considerations such as protection and enhancement of townscape character within settlements, wildness and tranquillity for example. A sound evidence base is required to inform decision-making with regard to these policy considerations.



7.5.2 Priorities for enhancing the evidence base within the AONB in this regard are considered to include:

- Undertaking urban character assessments (incorporating conservation area appraisals and detailed landscape setting studies where relevant) for settlements – the recently commissioned character assessment study in Breckland District may offer a useful model for this type of work
- Developing a county-level tranquillity mapping project within the context of the recent national-level tranquillity mapping undertaken by CPRE, to identify areas of countryside that are particularly sensitive to disturbance from noise and light pollution – work commissioned by Shrewsbury District Council may provide guidance as to a possible methodology for mapping tranquillity areas at an appropriate scale of resolution in Norfolk.

## **7.6 Norfolk Landscape Planning Steering Group**

7.6.1 To assist in taking forward the recommendations set out in this report, it is advisable that the original Norfolk Coast Partnership Project Steering Group continues as a mechanism for co-ordinating LCA work and its application across the AONB. In recognition of the wider interest in this initiative beyond the Norfolk Coast AONB specifically, it is recommended that all planning authorities and other relevant organisations in Norfolk be included in the Steering Group.



**APPENDIX A**  
**NORFOLK HISTORIC LANDSCAPE**  
**CHARACTERISATION PROJECT**



## **APPENDIX A**

### **NORFOLK HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION PROJECT**

#### **General**

The Norfolk Historic Landscape Characterisation Project Design (David Gurney of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology and Lynn Dyson-Bruce East of England HLC Co-ordinator, May 2004) sets out a summary, aims and objectives and background to the project.

#### **Summary**

The Norfolk Historic Landscape Characterisation Project forms part of a national initiative sponsored by English Heritage and which is being addressed at regional level with a co-ordinated programme covering the East of England. Its primary aim is to assemble and integrate information on the visible evidence of human impact on the landscape, defined in the European Landscape Convention (2000) as *'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'*. This information will be structured by the identification and grouping of historic and other environmental attributes to form historic landscape types of distinct and recognisable common character. The distribution of these landscape types will be mapped using GIS supported by written descriptions of the individual landscape types and the historical processes that they represent.

The proposed project is intended to provide in Norfolk a direct continuation of the methodology developed in recent years for Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Essex, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire with local variation accommodated as necessary. This should permit a reasonable degree of comparability of HLC results across the region.

The project will use essentially the same methodology that has been used elsewhere within the region although, with the devastating loss of field boundaries in Norfolk since 1950, a revised and simplified approach will be adopted, giving priority to the areas of best survival in field systems. There will be some differences in terms of the available map and digital data, but the objective will be to maintain as consistent a regional approach as is feasible, while accommodating local variation and character specific to the study area

The results of the programme will form a permanent and renewable database that will be utilised to provide information for a variety of planning, conservation and management-led initiatives and strategies, managing change not just in or near 'special' places but everywhere.

#### **Aims and Objectives**

Like all types of characterisation, HLC projects provide broad-brush overviews of complex aspects of the historic environment in order to provide new, wide-ranging understanding for the development of policy, and for conservation, management and development decisions. The principal aims and objectives of the Norfolk HLC project are as follows: -

##### ***Aims***

- To promote a better understanding of the historic environment.
- To assist with the current and future management of the historic landscape resource.
- To facilitate the management of continued change within the County of Norfolk
- To establish an integrated approach to sustainable management in partnership with other organisations who manage the historic environment, or whose actions affect it.

- To provide an historical context to descriptions of the landscape of Norfolk within the regional context.

### ***Objectives***

- To characterise the Historic Landscape of Norfolk through the identification and mapping of a range of defined Historic Landscape Types based on present land-use, land management and settlement patterns, which reflect differing historical processes in their formation.
- To identify sources to be examined to inform the characterisation process.
- To collect data from identified sources in a consistent manner.
- To assign modern land parcels to Historic Landscape Character Types.
- To map areas of Historic Landscape Character Types using GIS.
- To review the character areas so defined and assess appropriate management regimes.
- To enhance understanding and management of historic landscapes.
- To produce an archive and a report summarising the project in Norfolk.
- To disseminate the results of the Norfolk HLC project.

### **HLC and GIS**

HLC is a GIS-based technique. Its information is structured by the identification and grouping of archaeological, historic and other environmental attributes attached to land parcels (i.e. 'HLC polygons' within GIS). This method, unlike conventional landscape assessment, allows the creation of many different classifications of historic landscape types, each of distinct and recognisable common character, to meet many different uses and applications. The distribution of landscape types can be mapped using GIS supported by written descriptions of the landscape types and the historical processes that they represent.

The principal stage of HLC in Norfolk will define GIS polygons, based on groups of modern land parcels, that reflect common historic characteristics. Each polygon will be assigned to one of a pre-defined set of broad high-level HLC Types. More detailed characterisation is made possible by defining a range of attributes for each polygon, and recording them directly into MapInfo.

These attributes reflect the specific historic landscape features that characterise each polygon (e.g. aspects of field pattern, origin/age of woodland, presence of abandoned industrial activity). Later stages of the project will interrogate these attributes to produce Historic Landscape Types and other simplified classifications such as Historic Landscape Zones. The HLC is concerned primarily to recognise visible, extant historic character, not lost landscapes.

**APPENDIX B**  
**ECOLOGICAL NETWORK MAPPING**  
**PROJECT FOR NORFOLK**





## **APPENDIX B**

### **ECOLOGICAL NETWORK MAPPING PROJECT FOR NORFOLK**

#### **General**

The Report of Ecological Network Mapping Project for Norfolk - Presentation of Methodology and Draft Maps for Consultation (Reg Land, Norfolk Wildlife Trust for Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, July 2006) sets out a summary, aims and background to the project.

#### **Summary**

This report is produced for the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership. The Partnership has as a core aim the establishment of an ecological network in Norfolk.

In order to secure the long term future of wildlife, it will be necessary to protect the existing wildlife resource. In addition, it is increasingly apparent that the area of wildlife habitat needs to be greatly increased and re-connected if it is to survive in a human dominated landscape and be given a chance to adapt to climate change. The creation of an ecological network is, therefore, a necessity.

A series of maps showing an indicative ecological network for Norfolk are presented and the methodology used to derive them is set out. The maps identify core areas for a wide range of habitats which need to be protected. They also identify where new habitats can be created and where these can be connected.

These indicative maps are based on two approaches. Firstly, expert opinion has been sought on where the core areas for each BAP habitat are found and also where habitat creation opportunities and corridors could be located at the county level.

A second approach took the methodology adopted by the Regional Biodiversity Mapping Project and applied this to Norfolk to identify core areas, enhancement areas and strategic corridors. This approach related various spatial features of SSSI, County Wildlife Site (CWS) and BAP habitat distribution to Landscape Description Units.

The two approaches have their strengths and weaknesses and it is essential the full range of maps is referred when interpreting the ecological network needs. A map unifying the two approaches is presented which it is believed best illustrates the spatial priorities for creating an ecological network.

It is recommended that all local authorities in Norfolk adopt the ecological network concept along with the indicative maps and integrate them as appropriate into their Local Development Frameworks. The ecological network can help with priority setting and targeting of a wide range of actions. Examples are landscape characterisation studies and targeting of grant aid schemes such as the DEFRA Higher Level Scheme. Most importantly, though, local authorities should adapt the map to their areas and add more local sites to the network so that it covers the county comprehensively. In order to achieve this, additional resources may be required.

Improved data on the location of wildlife habitats is essential. The level of detail presented on the indicative maps is reliant on our incomplete knowledge of the distribution of wildlife habitats in the county. Much of the available information is out of date and inadequate for the planning of wildlife conservation. In addition, for some habitats, our knowledge of where they can be created is still fragmentary. It is recommended that the state of knowledge of habitat location and creation opportunities is assessed and a programme of work agreed to bring this up to date. It will also be desirable to place the ecological network in the public domain and it is recommended that the

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape System is considered to see if it is a suitable means for developing an agreed Norfolk approach.

A number of potential projects are also presented which if implemented could help develop various aspects of the network. It is recommended that these are further developed and opportunities identified for taking them forward.

### **Project Aims and Background**

Much of Norfolk is now a landscape dominated by intensive agriculture. Once extensive areas of habitat such as heathland, grassland and woodland now comprise small remnants isolated from each other and surrounded by relatively inhospitable land-use. As a result, there are significant consequences for the long-term survival of biodiversity. This process of habitat fragmentation has a number of consequences that affect the ability of wildlife to survive into the longer term:

- Firstly, small and isolated sites may become too small to support viable populations of a particular species or may be adversely impacted by surrounding land uses;
- Secondly, many ecological processes are now largely human controlled with the result that small, fragmented habitats are often unable to function naturally;
- Thirdly, there is increasing concern as to how our wildlife and habitats will respond to climate change.

In order to safeguard wildlife in the long-term there are a number of measures that need to be taken. Firstly, key wildlife sites must be protected from damage and destruction. Secondly, they should be properly managed and this includes the restoration of degraded sites. Thirdly, there is the need to expand and re-connect the existing areas and restore habitats where they have been destroyed. The large-scale restoration and linking up of habitats – a ‘landscape scale’ approach – is increasingly seen as necessary to safeguard our wildlife and to ensure sustainable development. One approach that provides the conceptual basis for achieving this outcome is that of the Ecological Network.

An Ecological Network in Norfolk comprises the following elements:

- Clusters of high value wildlife sites forming core areas;
- Enhancement or habitat creation areas;
- Corridors and stepping stones designed to promote connectivity between the sites and through the wider landscape;
- Buffer areas surrounding these sites to reduce the adverse impacts from adjacent land-uses

An Ecological Network can operate at any scale from the local to the international. An example of an international network is the system of protected wetlands established to safeguard migrating waterfowl between the Arctic and Africa. On a local scale for example, a network could be developed to protect and enhance a population of great crested newts on a farm by creating ponds and grass margins to fields.

The report has been produced by the Ecological Network Topic Group<sup>26</sup> under the auspices of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership<sup>27</sup>. The report has been produced following consultation with a range

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<sup>26</sup> The members of the Ecological Network Topic Group represented the following organisations as of March 2006 – Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, English Nature, RSPB.

of organisations and individuals in Norfolk. In addition a document setting out the principles behind the ecological network idea has been produced<sup>28</sup>. The report is presented in three parts:

- Part 1 sets out the approach taken to produce the indicative ecological network maps for Norfolk. It records the methodology adopted for the two approaches taken to derive the maps.
- Part 2 sets out a number of suggestions and recommendations for taking forward the ecological network idea to the implementation phase.
- Part 3 presents the indicative maps that collectively identify an ecological network for Norfolk

The report is aimed primarily at planning practitioners and conservation bodies but also those with some knowledge of nature conservation and involvement in the planning system. It is hoped that organisations that can help put in place the ecological network will adopt the recommendations set out in this report and play their part in establishing the ecological network.

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<sup>27</sup> *Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership. The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership is dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of the county's biological diversity, through the development and implementation of the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan. The Partnership's Steering Group consists of local authorities, statutory agencies and voluntary groups*

<sup>28</sup> *Making Space for Wildlife and People. 2005 Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership and Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Downloadable from [www.norfolkbiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org.uk)*



**APPENDIX C**  
**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS – AN OVERVIEW**



## APPENDIX C

### LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS – AN OVERVIEW

The new LDFs will normally comprise the following main Local Development Documents (LDDs):

- **Statement of Community Involvement** – sets out how the community will be consulted during the production of LDDs and in development control.
- **Core Strategy** – establishes the overarching vision for development in local authority areas and sets out the key planning objectives as a basis for policies. It contains a spatial strategy, strategic policies and proposals for promoting and controlling development in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, and includes a monitoring and implementation framework.
- **Development Control Policies** – comprise a suite of policies to be used in development control to ensure that all development meets the vision and strategy set out in the Core Strategy.
- **Site Specific Allocations** – this identifies site-specific land allocations for different types of development, and land to which specific policies apply.
- **Area Action Plans** – are developed, where necessary, for particular sites or areas identified for significant change or conservation. They focus on implementation, setting out the measures needed to deliver development or conservation initiatives.
- **Proposals Map** - expresses geographically the adopted development plan policies, including locations and sites for particular land use and development proposals, and areas of protection.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents** – provide detailed guidance to elaborate upon the core policies and proposals, e.g. design guides, site development briefs or topic based guidance. SPDs are capable of being updated regularly making them more able to respond to changing circumstances. They do not have Development Plan Document status, but are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The Core Strategy, Development Control Policies, Site Specific Allocations, Proposals Map and any Area Action Plans, together with the Regional Spatial Strategy, comprise the statutory Development Plan Documents (DPDs) against which all planning decisions will normally need to be made.





**APPENDIX D**  
**EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**



## **APPENDIX D**

### **EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

#### **Norfolk Structure Plan 1999**

##### **County Strategy**

###### ***Policy CS.7 – Development in the Countryside***

In the countryside, priority will be given to conserving landscape character and wildlife, and protecting agricultural, recreational and natural resources.

##### **Environment Policies**

###### ***Policy ENV.1 - Overall Strategy***

High priority will be given to protecting the environmental assets of the County and conserving and enhancing biodiversity. In particular there will be special emphasis given to the protection, conservation and enhancement of areas of local landscape character, wildlife value, historic urban or rural environments, the setting of urban areas, towns and villages and the quality and character of the environment generally.

###### ***Policy ENV.2 – Landscape : Protection of Designated Areas***

Development which would be detrimental to the character of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Heritage Coast and The Broads will not be permitted unless there is an overriding proven national need for the development and there are no suitable alternative sites.

###### ***Policy ENV.3 – Landscape : Areas of Important Landscape Quality***

In the areas of important landscape quality, the Brecks, the river valleys, the remaining length of undeveloped coast, the Wash area, historic parks and gardens and their settings, broadleaved woodland, heath and commonland, proposals for development will only be acceptable where they can be shown to conserve and are sensitive to the appearance and character of these areas.

###### ***Policy ENV.4 – Landscape : Protection of Countryside***

The distinctive character of the Norfolk countryside and coast will be protected for its own sake and proposals for development in these areas but outside the areas of special protection will only be acceptable where they do not significantly harm the character of these areas.

##### **Design Policies**

###### ***Policy ENV.12 - Design***

A high standard of design for all new development will be required reflecting, where appropriate, local styles, character and materials.

#### **King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council Local Plan (1998)**

##### **Strategic Statement**

***Policy SS3*** The Council will conserve the quality and character of the Borough's countryside and coast and the built environment of its towns and villages.

## **Conserving Environmental Resources Policies**

**Policy 4/5** Development which would be detrimental to the natural beauty of the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty shown on the Proposals Map, and its setting, or the character of the defined Heritage Coast and its objectives, will not be permitted.

**Policy 4/6** In the Area of Important Landscape Quality shown on the Proposals Map development which damages the distinctive character or appearance of the landscape will not be permitted.

**Policy 4/7** The Council will seek to protect and, where appropriate, enhance features of value to the landscape like the Marshland Drovers as shown on the Proposals Map, trees, woodlands, hedgerows, heathlands, lakes, ponds, streams, commons, fen reclamation banks and salterns. It will make Tree Preservation Orders and Hedgerow Protection Orders where necessary and may impose conditions on planning permissions, designed to safeguard landscape interests.

### **North Norfolk Local Plan (1998)**

#### **Development Strategy**

##### ***Policy 5: The Countryside***

In the Countryside high priority will be given to the protection and enhancement of the appearance and character of the area, and development proposals will not be permitted unless they are for the purposes listed below and are in accordance with the other policies of the Local Plan:

- (a) agriculture;
- (b) forestry;
- (c) the preservation of Listed Buildings;
- (d) the reuse and adaptation of buildings;
- (e) coastal and flood protection;
- (f) affordable housing in accordance with
- (g) the extension and replacement of dwellings;
- (h) sites for gypsies and travelling showpeople;
- (i) new-build employment generating proposals where there are particular environmental or operational reasons for the development not being located in existing or proposed General or Village Employment Areas and which cannot be suitably accommodated within existing buildings;
- (j) community services and facilities that meet a particular proven need of the local rural population;
- (k) development by statutory undertakers or public utility providers;
- (l) renewable energy projects;
- (m) recreation and tourism;
- (n) transport; and
- (o) mineral extraction

#### **Design Policies**

##### ***Policy 13: Design and Setting of Development***

Development proposals will be permitted provided that:

(a) they are appropriate in terms of:

- i. layout
- ii. site coverage
- iii. architectural style

- iv. scale
- v. bulk
- vi. height
- vii. materials
- viii. landscaping
- ix. visual impact, and
- x. their relationship to nearby properties

(account will be taken of the above factors in the context of the sites themselves, their immediate surroundings and, where appropriate, longer views);

(b) in the Growth Towns and Small Towns, they harmonise with the townscape and general character of the areas in which they are set;

(c) in the Large Villages and Selected Small Villages, they are in accordance with Policy 3: Large Villages and Policy 4: Selected Small Villages respectively; and

(d) in the Countryside, they are located so as to be easily assimilated into the landscape or are well related to an existing group of buildings.

In meeting the above criteria, development proposals should take account of the North Norfolk Design Guide (see Part D).

### **Environment Policies**

#### ***Policy 20: Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty***

In the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the prime planning consideration will be the conservation and enhancement of the beauty of the area, and development proposals that would be significantly detrimental to it will not be permitted.

#### ***Policy 21: Area of High Landscape Value***

The appearance and character of the Area of High Landscape Value will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals that would be significantly detrimental to its appearance or character will not be permitted.

#### ***Policy 24: The Broads and its Setting***

Development proposals that would be significantly detrimental to the appearance or character of The Broads, or its setting, will not be permitted.

#### ***Policy 26: Undeveloped Coast***

In the Undeveloped Coast development proposals that do not require a coastal location or would be significantly detrimental to the appearance or character of the area will not be permitted.

#### ***Policy 27: Conserving the Landscape Setting of Bypassed Settlements***

On the periphery of bypassed settlements (including proposed as well as existing bypasses), development proposals should ensure that sufficient land would remain undeveloped in order to conserve the amenity and character of the rural setting of the bypass and the settlement to be bypassed. Where appropriate, additional planting will be required in furtherance of this approach.

#### ***Policy 30: Important Landscape Features***

Development proposals that would be significantly detrimental to the appearance or character of important landscape features will not be permitted.

***Policy 31: Landscape Enhancement***

The Council will encourage proposals to enhance the landscape, reflecting the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (see Part E, Annex 1), through positive management and additional planting.

**Great Yarmouth Borough Wide Local Plan (2001)**

**Natural Environment Policies**

***Policy NNV1 (Protection of AONB)***

By giving priority to landscape over all other planning considerations, the council will provide long term protection to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty shown on the proposals map, and any adjoining area, from all forms of development which would have a significant adverse impact on the appearance of the designated area, particularly development proposals that would:

- (a) Introduce into the landscape buildings or other structures or activities which would not be in keeping with the landscape character and traditional built form of the area; and/or
- (b) Destroy or damage features of landscape importance which contribute to the character of the area.

*(Objective: To safeguard the varied character and features of the landscape within and adjoining the Plan Area.)*

***Policy NNV2 (Landscape Important to The Broads Scene)***

In areas identified on the proposal map as ‘Landscape Important to the Broadland Scene’ the council will only permit development that would not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape character and traditional built form of the area, or destroy or damage features of landscape importance which contribute to the character of the area.

*(Objective: To safeguard the varied character and features of the landscape within and adjoining the Plan Area.)*

***Policy NNV3 (Landscape Important to the Coastal Scene)***

In the areas shown on the proposals map as ‘Landscape Important to the Coastal Scene’ the council will only permit development that would not significantly detract from the essential open character of the areas.

*(Objective: To protect the remaining open coast.)*

***Policy NNV5 (Landscape Important to the Setting of Settlements)***

In the areas around settlements shown on the proposals map as ‘Landscape Important to the Setting of Settlements’ the council will permit development provided a developer can demonstrate essential need or that the development would not impinge on the physical separation between settlements particularly between Great Yarmouth and Caister and Gorleston and Hopton which are major gateways to the town, or give rise to any other significant adverse impact.

*(Objectives: To protect the setting of settlements and prevent urban sprawl.)*

***Policy NNV6 (Areas of Important Landscape Character)***

The borough council will only permit development which would not have a significant adverse effect on Areas of Important Landscape Character, as shown on the proposals map, and the applicant can demonstrate that:-

- (a) The introduction of buildings/structures etc. into the landscape would be in keeping with the intrinsic landscape qualities and traditional built form of the area.

(b) Features of landscape importance which contribute to the character of the area would not be damaged, destroyed or permanently altered in any way.

*(Objective: To retain the character of local landscapes.)*

***Policy NNV7 (Countryside and Rural Character)***

The council will protect the remainder of the countryside outside the areas shown on the proposal map as being of landscape interest by permitting only those proposals that are in keeping with the rural character of the area.

*(Objective: Protection of the countryside for its own sake).*

***Policy NNV9 (Landscape Enhancement Areas)***

Within identified landscape enhancement areas the borough council will promote, seek and secure improvements to the landscape through restoration and enhancement measures including the creation of wildlife habitats.

*(Objective: To secure improvements to the amenity and natural environment.)*

***Policy NNV10 (New Development and Landscape Features/Habitats)***

In connection with new development the borough council will, where appropriate, expect the retention, restoration and creation of landscape features and wildlife habitats.

*(Objective: To enhance the variety and quality of landscapes.)*

***Policy NNV11 (Demolition and Landscaping)***

Where permission is required for demolition and there is no immediate intention to redevelop the site, the borough council will expect the site to be landscaped in keeping with the appearance of the locality.

*(Objective: To achieve visual improvements.)*

**The Broads Local Plan (1997)**

**Conservation of Landscape and Wildlife Policies**

***Policy C 9 Trees and woodlands***

Development which would have a significant adverse effect on trees or woodlands of landscape or wildlife importance will not be permitted.

***Policy C 10 Tree Preservation Orders***

The Authority will make full use of Tree Preservation Orders where there is a significant threat of destruction or harm to individual trees, groups of trees or areas of woodland which are worthy of protection and are important to the character of The Broads landscape or built environment, or to wildlife habitats.

***Policy C 11 Trees and landscaping in new development***

The Authority will require planning applications for new development to include a comprehensive landscaping scheme where appropriate, which will ensure that the proposals complement and enhance the proposed development and its setting in The Broads landscape or built environment. Where appropriate, the Authority will impose conditions to require:

- a) the protection of existing trees, treebelts and hedgerows;
- b) new planting or other landscaping measures within the scheme to enhance the character of the area and to minimise the visual impact of the development on its surroundings;
- c) the implementation of the landscaping scheme during the earliest possible planting season during the development.

***Policy C 12 Protection of open space, common land and staites***

Development will not be permitted if it would have a significant adverse effect on open space, common land or land at parish or public staites which is identified on the Proposals Map or which otherwise:

- a) makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of The Broads landscape, waterways or built environment; or
- b) is important for wildlife or is an important wildlife habitat.

***Policy C 19 The Coast***

Development will not be permitted within the coastal zone as defined on the Proposals Map.

***Policy C 20 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty***

Development which would have a significant adverse effect on the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will not be permitted.

**Built Environment Policies**

***Policy B 11 Design***

Development will only be permitted if its scale, form, design, external materials and colour would be appropriate to its setting. New development in the built environment should respect the character and townscape of the area. New development in the countryside should be appropriately located so as to minimise its visual intrusion in the landscape.



**APPENDIX E**  
**RECOMMENDED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**FRAMEWORK POLICIES**



## APPENDIX E

### RECOMMENDED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK POLICIES

#### **POLICY X – NORFOLK COAST AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**

*THE PRIME CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE NORFOLK COAST AONB WILL BE THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE NATURAL BEAUTY, BIODIVERSITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE AREA. OPPORTUNITIES FOR REMEDIATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF DAMAGED LANDSCAPES WILL BE TAKEN AS THEY ARISE. THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE RIGOROUSLY CONSIDERED.*

*DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT EITHER:*

- *RELATES TO THE APPROPRIATE RE-USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS*
- *IS APPROPRIATE TO THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING OF THE AONB*
- *IS DESIRABLE FOR THE UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT OF THE AREA*

*AND PROVIDED THE DEVELOPMENT WILL:*

- *BE DESIGNED TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS*
- *NOT DETRACT FROM THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE AONB*
- *SEEK TO FACILITATE DELIVERY OF THE AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES*

*DEVELOPMENT CAUSING SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE AONB SHOULD ONLY BE PERMITTED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.*

#### ***Supporting Explanatory Text***

*Government policy in PPS7 affords nationally designated areas the highest status of protection in relation to natural beauty, which includes biodiversity and cultural heritage as well as scenery.*

*The Norfolk Coast AONB was designated in 1968 for its relatively undeveloped and unspoilt coastal character - the wild, rich and diverse mix of unusual coastal geomorphological features of sand and shingle spits and broad band of salt-marshes, set against the contrasting picturesque backdrop of distinctive rising wooded rolling hills, ridges and heathland that characterise the inland agricultural landscapes. The Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan 2004-2009 provides guidance for the conservation and enhancement of these special qualities of the AONB. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local authorities to have regard to AONB purposes, and the Plan will need to be taken into consideration in all development proposals within or close to the AONB.*

*National policy advises that major developments should not take place in AONBs except in exceptional circumstances, and that where planning permission is granted that development is carried out to high environmental standards. Development proposals that, by virtue of their scale, design, and/or location, might cause significant adverse impacts on the Norfolk Coast AONB should demonstrate that they are in the overwhelming public interest and include an assessment of (i) the need for the development; (ii) alternative options for development, including sites outside the designated area, and (iii) incorporate effective mitigation proposals to avoid, reduce or remedy any detrimental effects on the special qualities of the area.*

## **POLICY X - PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

*PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF URBAN AREAS SHOULD BE INFORMED BY AND BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT, AND SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACTIVE CONSERVATION, ENHANCEMENT AND/OR RESTORATION OF THESE AREAS.*

*DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT ITS LOCATION, SCALE AND DESIGN WILL PROTECT, CONSERVE AND/OR ENHANCE:*

- \* THE SPECIAL QUALITIES AND LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE AREA (INCLUDING ITS HISTORICAL, BIODIVERSITY AND CULTURAL CHARACTER AND ITS TRANQUILLITY)*
- \* THE VISUAL AND HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS AND THEIR LANDSCAPE SETTING*
- \* THE PATTERN OF DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPE FEATURES, SUCH AS WATERCOURSES, WOODLAND, TREES AND FIELD BOUNDARIES, AND THEIR FUNCTION AS ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS FOR DISPERSAL OF WILDLIFE*
- \* VISUALLY SENSITIVE SKYLINES, HILLSIDES, VALLEYSIDES AND GEOLOGICAL FEATURES*
- \* NOCTURNAL CHARACTER*
- \* THE SETTING OF, AND VIEWS FROM, THE NORFOLK COAST AONB, THE BROADS, CONSERVATION AREAS AND HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS*

### ***Supporting Explanatory Text***

*The undeveloped countryside is part of the everyday surroundings for a large proportion of the population in the Borough/District, and the visual character of landscapes and seascapes is a significant influence on the quality of life for communities in all areas. In line with Government policy, the Council affords high priority to the protection, conservation and enhancement of landscape character in delivering sustainable development within the Borough/District. The Council seeks to encourage well-designed, high quality new development and associated infrastructure (e.g. highways works) that helps sustain and/or create landscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity.*

*The landscape character of the whole Borough/District has been identified by an integrated Landscape Character Assessment, a technical study prepared in consultation with representatives of stakeholder groups. A Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to provide guidance on how the Landscape Character Assessment can be applied to help protect, conserve and enhance the landscape. Informed by biodiversity and historic landscape studies, the Landscape Character Assessment identifies and describes distinctive Landscape Character Areas throughout the Borough/District as a whole. Drawing on this assessment, the SPD will set out objectives and guidelines for conserving, enhancing and restoring the character of the Landscape Character Areas. This information can be used, along with other studies that provide part of the evidence base about landscape character, to inform considerations about the effects of development proposals on the distinctive character, qualities and sensitivities of landscapes and seascapes within the Borough/District.*

## **POLICY X - PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER**

*PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE INFORMED BY AND BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND RELEVANT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER STUDIES, AND SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACTIVE CONSERVATION, ENHANCEMENT AND/OR RESTORATION OF THESE AREAS.*

*DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT ITS LOCATION, SCALE AND DESIGN WILL PROTECT, CONSERVE AND/OR ENHANCE:*

- \* THE SPECIAL QUALITIES AND LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE AREA (INCLUDING ITS HISTORICAL, BIODIVERSITY AND CULTURAL CHARACTER AND ITS TRANQUILLITY)*
- \* THE VISUAL AND HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS AND THEIR LANDSCAPE SETTING*
- \* THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF STREETSAPES AND SETTLEMENT MORPHOLOGY*
- \* THE PATTERN OF DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPE FEATURES, SUCH AS WATERCOURSES, WOODLAND, TREES AND FIELD BOUNDARIES, AND THEIR FUNCTION AS ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS FOR DISPERSAL OF WILDLIFE*
- \* VISUALLY SENSITIVE SKYLINES, HILLSIDES, VALLEYSIDES AND GEOLOGICAL FEATURES*
- \* NOCTURNAL CHARACTER*
- \* THE SETTING OF, AND VIEWS FROM, THE NORFOLK COAST AONB, THE BROADS, CONSERVATION AREAS AND HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS*

### ***Supporting Explanatory Text***

*The undeveloped countryside is part of the everyday surroundings for a large proportion of the population in the Borough/District, and the visual character of landscapes, seascapes and townscapes are a significant influence on the quality of life for communities in all areas. The settlement pattern of separate settlements with intervening countryside is also highly valued by local communities. In line with Government policy, the Council affords high priority to the protection, conservation and enhancement of landscape and townscape character in delivering sustainable development within the Borough/District. The Council seeks to encourage well-designed, high quality new development and associated infrastructure (e.g. highway works) that helps sustain and/or create landscapes and townscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity. Retaining the separate identity, character and the visual and functional amenity of settlements and preventing coalescence is also a key objective.*

*The landscape character of the whole Borough/District has been identified by an integrated Landscape Character Assessment, a technical study prepared in consultation with representatives of stakeholder groups. A Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to provide guidance on how the Landscape Character Assessment can be applied to help protect, conserve and enhance the landscape. Informed by biodiversity and historic landscape studies, the Landscape Character Assessment identifies and describes distinctive Landscape Character Areas throughout the Borough/District as a whole. Drawing on this assessment, the SPD will set out objectives and guidelines for conserving, enhancing and restoring the character of the Landscape Character Areas. This information can be used, along with other studies that provide part of the evidence base about landscape and the character of towns and villages in the Borough/District, to inform considerations about the effects of development proposals on the distinctive character, qualities and sensitivities of landscapes, seascapes and townscapes within the Borough/District. Other studies include the Norfolk Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Urban Archaeological Surveys, Conservation Area Appraisals, Town/Village Design Statements and Parish Plans developed by local communities.*





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