

**Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk**  
**District Council**  
**Landscape Guidance**

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August 2015

# **Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council**

## **Landscape Guidance 2015**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The landscape of Babergh and Mid Suffolk (South and North Suffolk) is acknowledged as being attractive and an important part of why people choose to live and work here. However current pressures for development in the countryside, and the changing agricultural and recreational practices and pressures, are resulting in changes that in some instances have been damaging to the local character and distinctiveness of the landscape.

1.1.1 Some development is necessary within the countryside, in order to promote a sustainable prosperous and vibrant rural economy. However, such development would be counterproductive if it were to harm the quality of the countryside/landscape it is set within and therefore the quality of life benefits, in terms of health and wellbeing that come from a rural landscape in good condition.<sup>1</sup>

1.1.2 The Council takes the view that there is a need to safeguard the character of both districts countryside by ensuring new development integrates positively with the existing character. Therefore, a Landscape Guidance has been produced to outline the main elements of the existing character and to outline broad principles that all development in the countryside will be required to follow.

1.1.3 Well designed and appropriately located development in the countryside can capture the benefits of sustainable economic development whilst still retaining and enhancing valuable landscape characteristics, which are so important to Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

1.1.4 The protection and enhancement of both districts landscape is essential not only for the intrinsic aesthetic and historic value that supports tourism and the economy for the area but also to maintain the quality of life for the communities that live in the countryside.

1.1.5 In Babergh two areas have special protection because they are nationally important landscapes defined as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It should be noted that AONB's are of equal landscape value and importance to National Parks (NPPF Para 115). In addition there are areas identified in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk as internationally and nationally important for the wildlife. These are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar and Special Protection Areas (SPA). In Mid Suffolk there are also two Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites (RIGS). The Councils will fulfil their obligations to protect and enhance these designated landscapes and sites to ensure a rich landscape, and biodiversity, is maintained for the enjoyment of everyone now and in the future.

<sup>1</sup> International Journal of Public Health [Landscape and well-being: a scoping study on the health-promoting impact of outdoor environments.](#) Andrea Abraham et al - see also Suffolk's [2014 Annual Public Health Report pp27-29](#)

## 1.2 THE AIM OF THE LANDSCAPE GUIDANCE

1.2.1 Although settlements are intrinsically part of the landscape this guide is predominantly aimed at development in the countryside, although its application can be wider in certain circumstances. The overriding aim and purpose of the Landscape Guidance is to improve the quality of development coming forward in the countryside as defined in the Core Strategy. Separate guidance is to be prepared for development within settlements along with a good practice library. The Landscape Guidance should be read in conjunction with these documents.

1.2.2 This will be achieved by guiding development in the countryside, by ensuring they not only fit in with their surroundings, but also help retain and enhance the distinctive character of their area.

1.2.3 By understanding the different landscape characters and how the settlements within them relate to one another. New development proposals can integrate with, and reflect, this existing character.

1.2.4 This Landscape Guidance builds on, and should be read in conjunction with, landscape studies, assessments and guidance, in particular -

- The Babergh Draft Landscape Assessment and Action Programme 2004
- National Character Area Profiles by Natural England - (NCA no.82 Suffolk Coast & Heaths, no.83 South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands and no.86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>
- The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (SLCA)  
<http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>
- Suffolk Design Guide <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/planning-and-design-advice/suffolk-design-guide-for-residential-areas/>
- Suffolk Manual <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/environment-and-transport/planning-and-buildings/planning-and-design-advice/suffolk-manual/>
- Suffolk Hedgerow Survey 1998- 2012

1.2.5 This Landscape Guidance has divided the district into 9 landscape typologies for Babergh and 12 landscape typologies for Mid Suffolk as identified in the Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment. Each landscape character provides a brief description on the essential defining characteristics of the landscape and settlements i.e. what makes each landscape distinct from the surrounding landscapes and which elements are important. Each section also identifies actions/design objectives for each landscape type.

1.2.6 Each section dealing with a particular landscape typology is not a definitive guide or list of all features that are important (refer to the Suffolk LCA). This analysis does however give a flavour of what is important about that particular landscape area.

Furthermore generic design principles that apply to development across the district are listed at the end of this document.

1.2.7 The purpose of this document is to secure development that will integrate into the landscape character of the area. It will be applied consistently to all relevant development.

### **1.3 PURPOSE FOR THIS GUIDANCE**

1.3.1 The whole of Babergh's and Mid Suffolk's landscape is sensitive to change. Development can cause irreparable change to the character of the landscape, caused by inappropriate locations, design, use of materials or insufficient, inadequate or inappropriate landscaping

1.3.2 This guide identifies the specific landscape and settlement character within the designated areas. It then moves on to provide more detail on the siting, design, materials and landscaping of new development in the countryside.

1.3.3 The guide refers to buildings within the countryside and villages as they appear in the landscape as well as to development proposed on the edge of villages and towns.

1.3.4 In order to bring together a comprehensive guide that supports local diversity and distinctiveness, an overview of the impact 20<sup>th</sup> century development has had on its rural and/ or village setting has been considered.

1.3.5 Some modern developments have made a positive contribution to the character of the landscape and village. However; some 20<sup>th</sup> century developments, in particular, have failed to take into consideration the landscape setting, its historic form or local building character which can lead to the standardisation of areas.

1.3.6 The Landscape Guidance aims to provide examples of good design practice (and also poor design practice) with the aim to provide advice on more appropriate designs for the rural areas.

### **1.4 THE PLANNING CONTEXT**

1.4.1 The NPPF sets national policy context requiring that "*The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils.*" (para.109)

1.4.2 The Babergh Core Strategy (adopted Feb 2014) and The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (adopted September 2008) forms part of the development plan for their respective districts, This document sets out strategic policies on development in the countryside as well as broad policies to protect the appearance and character of the landscape.

1.4.3 The purpose of the Landscape Guidance is to expand on the Local Plan Documents by providing more detailed design guidance for new buildings, changes of use and smaller scale alterations (including householder development) As a Supplementary Planning Document it will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

1.4.4 For the purposes of this guidance, the definition of countryside is taken to be:  
 For Babergh the definition in the adopted Babergh Core Strategy (pg 21, 2.1.5.1) which is: *“Everywhere beyond the built up areas of the urban/ regeneration areas and Core and Hinterland Villages, defined by settlement development boundaries. This includes smaller rural villages, some small clusters of houses located remotely from village centres and a few very small rural hamlets.”*  
 For Mid Suffolk the definition in the adopted Mid Suffolk Strategy (pg.23): *“open countryside and villages located in the countryside.”*

1.4.5 For Babergh this document primarily supplements policy CS15. The other related stated Core Strategy policies are; CS2, CS3, CS11, CS12, CS16, CS17, CS20, CS21, and Babergh Local Plan Alteration 2 (2006) policies CR07, CR08, CR09, CR10, CR13, CR14, CR15, CR16, CR18, CR19 and CR22  
 For Mid Suffolk this document primarily supplements CS5. The other related stated CS policies are; CS2, CS4, and Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) Policies CL2, CL5, CL6, CL8, CL9, CL11, CL12, CL13, CL14, CL18, CL19, CL20, CL21, CL22, CL23, CL24

This document will primarily supplement the new joint Local Plan Policy for Landscape, once the new policies are adopted.

1.4.6 The Council believe the landscape of the districts to be a ‘heritage asset’. To this end the Councils corporate priorities are relevant to this guidance. Safeguarding the countryside and heritage of the area is a corporate priority for the council and as part of our vision has been addressed in: –

Babergh The Core Strategy which aims : *‘to continue to conserve and enhance the heritage assets throughout the district for the benefit of all to enjoy and to enrich the quality of life and learn from local knowledge and understanding of the past through these assets and ensure they are safeguarded for future generations to enjoy and learn from’* Protect / conserve and enhance: local character; built, natural and historic environment including archaeology, biodiversity, landscape, townscape; shape & scale of communities; the quality and character of the countryside; and treasured views of the district (Objective 6);

Mid Suffolk The Core Strategy which aims to: *“improve and protect the natural environment; sustainable use of natural resources; develop environmental awareness; and safeguard the cultural and historical heritage of the District.* To protect, manage, enhance and restore the landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity of the district (Objective SO1).

1.4.7 In Babergh a Supplementary Planning Document is also produced to support Policy CS11 Strategy for Development for Core and Hinterland Villages to further define the criteria that will need to be met for any future development within these areas. The Landscape aims to be used in conjunction with the SPD to ensure appropriate development is supported as it sets out design parameters for proposals promoted under Policy CS11.

## 1.5 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS in BABERGH

### 1.5.1 **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

- 1.5.2 An AONB is defined as an area of high scenic quality which has statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. (Natural England)
- 1.5.3 The NPPF stipulates that "*Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and the scenic beauty in [National Parks, the Broads and] Areas of outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important in all of these areas...* " (para.115)

- 1.5.4 In accordance with the provision of Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, "*in exercising or performing any function in relation to, or so as to affect, land in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, relevant authorities 'shall have regard' to their purposes....The duty applies to all local planning authorities, not just national park authorities. The duty is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside Area of Outstanding natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on the setting of, and implementation of, the statutory purposes of these protected areas*".

### 1.5.5 **Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and Shotley Peninsula Project Area**

- 1.5.6 The Shotley Peninsula is in the eastern part of Babergh and is located between the rivers Stour and Orwell with the northern and southern sides designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/about-us/aonb-management-plan/>
- 1.5.7 A Landscape Character Assessment of Shotley Peninsula and Hinterland has been compiled on behalf of the Stour and Orwell Society and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership -  
[http://www.stourandorwellsociety.org.uk/landscape\\_character.html](http://www.stourandorwellsociety.org.uk/landscape_character.html)

### 1.5.8 **Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project**

- 1.5.9 This area is in the south and south-west part of Babergh and is located along the river Stour. -<http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/about-us/the-aonb-management-plan/>

A detailed Landscape Characterisation of the AONB and wider project area can be found here

[http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/userfiles/pdfs/DV%20Hist%20landscape%20Study/Core\\_Document\\_MaM\\_LandscapeCharacterStudy.pdf](http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/userfiles/pdfs/DV%20Hist%20landscape%20Study/Core_Document_MaM_LandscapeCharacterStudy.pdf)

- 1.5.10 In 2013 a proposed extension to the boundary of the existing AONB, an area located south-east of Sudbury, was submitted to Natural England –

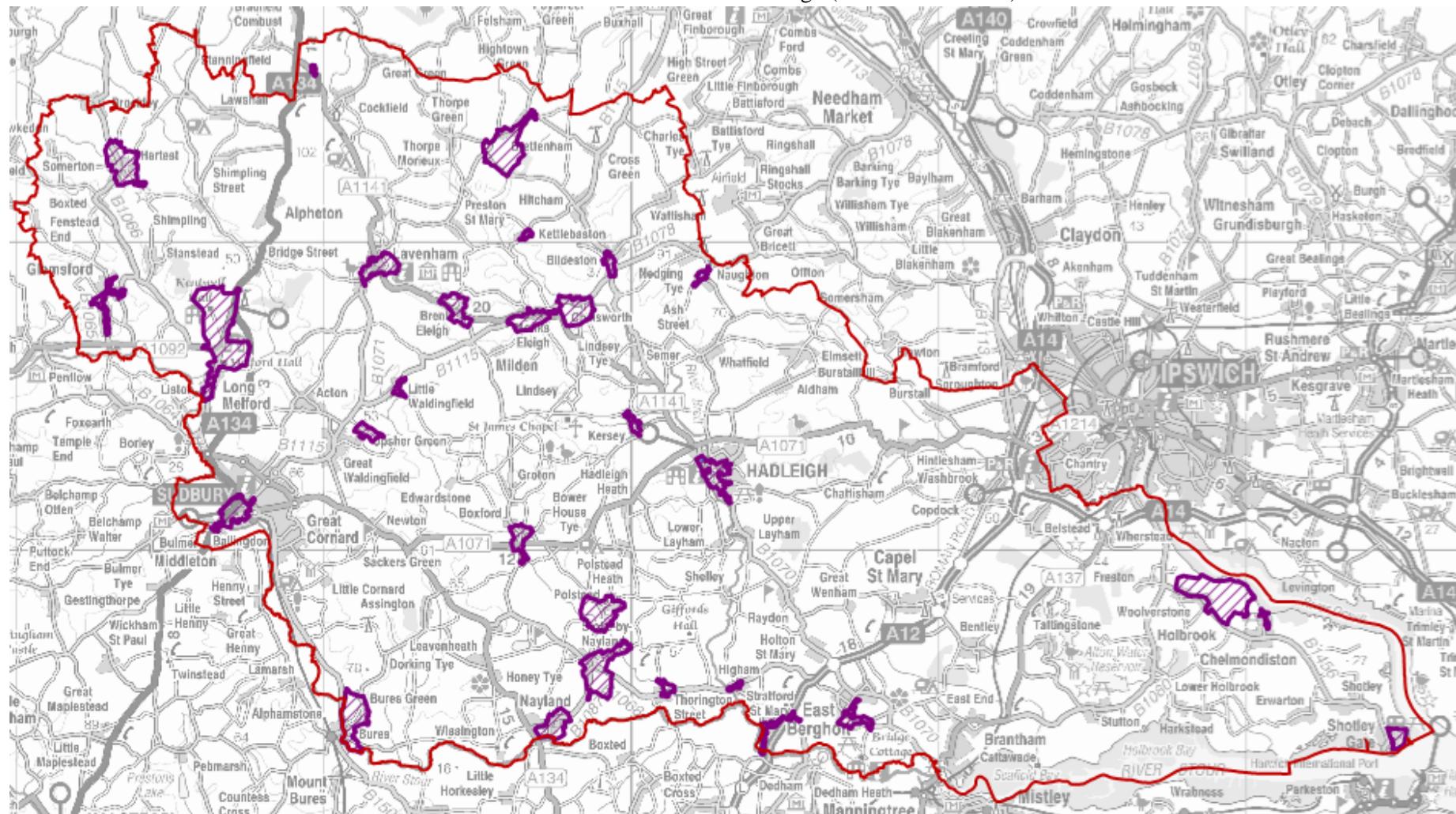
1.5.11 **Conservation Areas (CA)**

1.5.12 A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Usually this constitutes the 'historic core' of a settlement and will probably itself contain a number of listed buildings, which have their own individual protection. The majority of buildings within a conservation area may be unlisted, but are nevertheless important as they can provide the setting for the listed buildings, enclose interesting spaces or form an identifiable group in their own right.

There are 29 Conservation Areas within the Babergh District and currently 24 Conservation Area Appraisals have been adopted by Babergh district Council as Non Statutory Supplementary Planning Guidance. A list of the villages and towns designated as Conservation Areas is provided in the Annexe. The Conservation Area appraisals can be found on the Babergh District Council website - <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-listed-buildings/conservation-areas/conservation-areas-in-babergh/>

1.5.13 Much of the significance of many of the districts conservation areas lay in their landscape setting, agricultural heritage and relationship with the countryside. Conservation areas are therefore an important designation to have regard to when considering development in a 'landscape setting'. Similar to AONB, the impact of development proposals that are situated outside, but which might have an impact on the setting of, and implementation of, are material to considerations.

### Conservation Areas of Babergh (Councils own data)



## 1.5.14 **LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS in MID SUFFOLK**

### 1.5.15 **Conservation Areas (CA)**

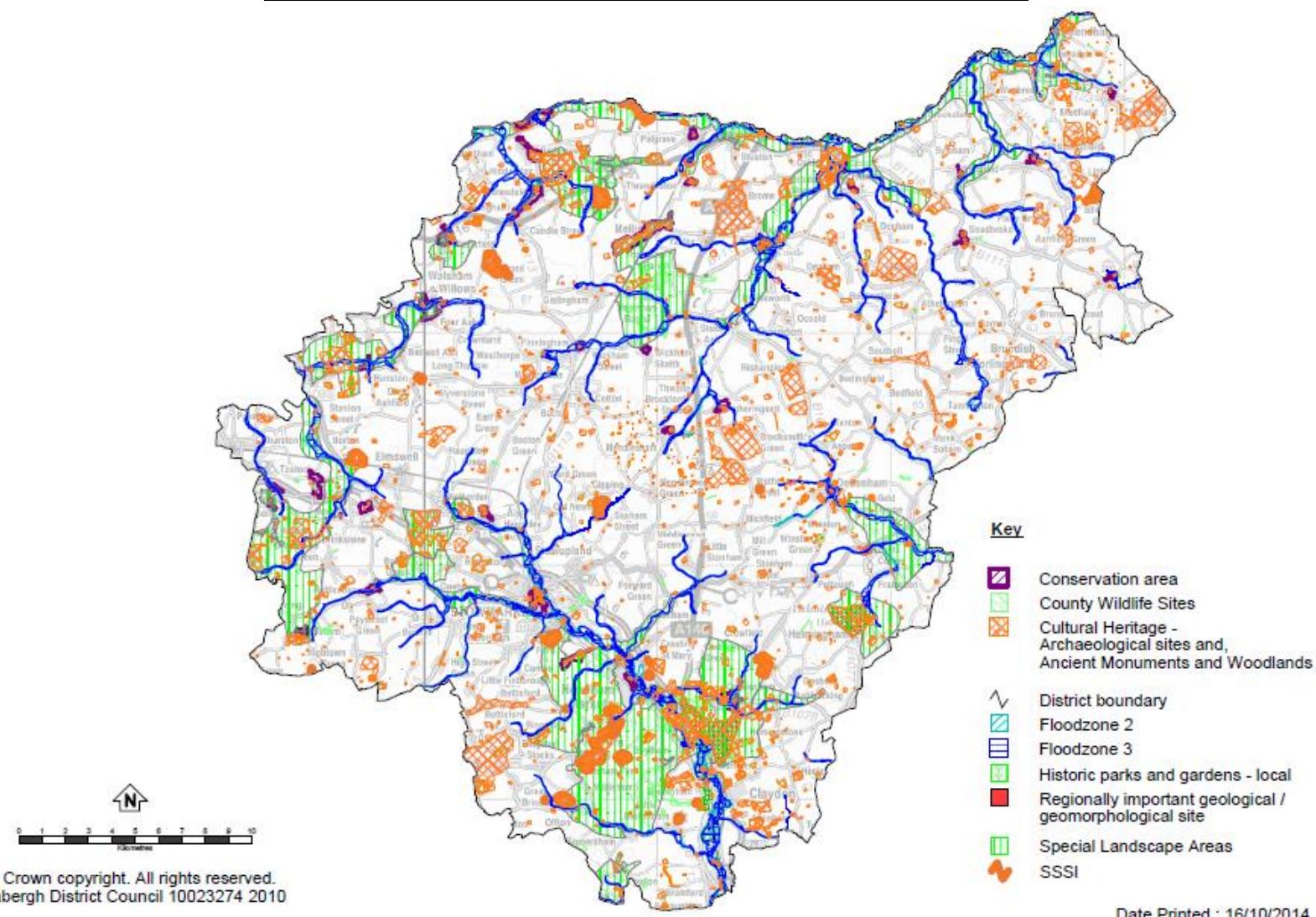
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There are 31 Conservation Areas within the Mid Suffolk District and the Conservation Area Appraisals have been adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council as Non Statutory Supplementary Planning Guidance. A list of the villages and towns designated as Conservation Areas is provided in the Annexe. The Conservation Area appraisals can be found on the Mid Suffolk District Council website -

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-and-listed-buildings/conservation-areas/conservation-areas-in-mid-suffolk/>

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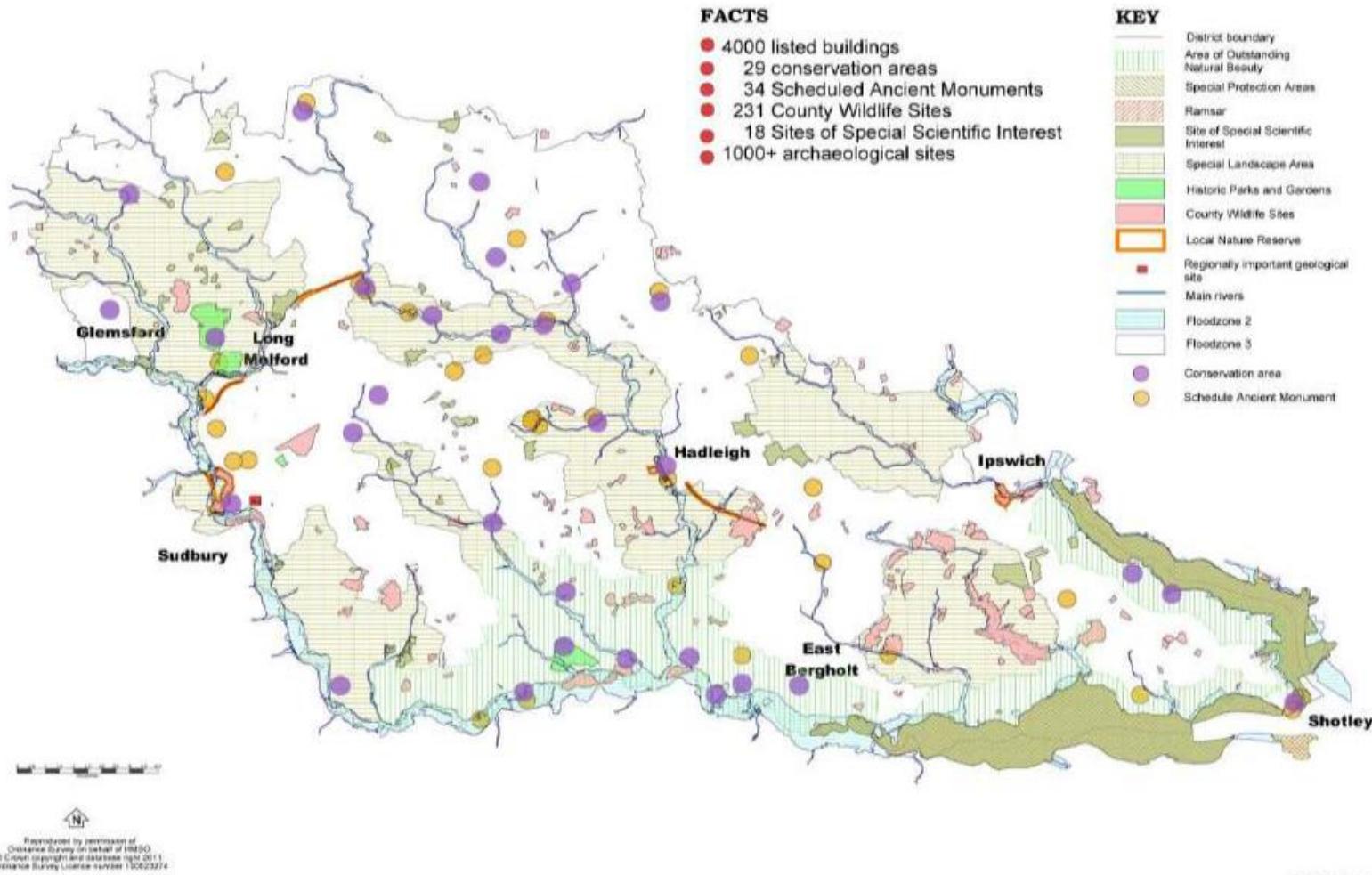
## Mid Suffolk Districts Environmental Characteristics



## Babergh Districts Environmental Characteristics

(Extract from Babergh Local Plan 2011-2031, Core Strategy and Policies (Feb 2014))

### Environment Map



1.6 When preparing this Landscape Guidance it became apparent that there are a number of overarching landscape features which are important to the underlying landscape character of the districts when considered as a whole. The Council will support development that safeguards, restores or enhances these features.

1.6.1 Arable/Pastoral Land Use – This is the predominant land use in the Districts which gives an underlying rural character. The character of the area is intrinsically linked with agriculture, predominately arable, although there are areas of livestock grazing, Environmental Stewardship, woodland and orchard. This link is evident in the buildings and land uses in the district along with the local food heritage and wider local economy.

1.6.2 Vernacular Building Traditions and Use of Materials – The distinctive building traditions of the area are readily appreciable with many examples being common place. This gives the district a rich built heritage giving a strong character and sense of place. These buildings range from traditional agricultural buildings to domestic and some commercial buildings. Even national architectural styles have been given a local flavour by mixing with these traditional materials and approaches.

1.6.3 Network of Rural Lanes – There are many rural lanes in the districts flanked by ditches and hedges, characterised by a narrowness and intimacy. These rural lanes give a sense of rural remoteness and tranquillity – an important component of the districts sense of place.

1.6.4 Hedgerows and Woodlands – Although a predominately arable landscape in which hedgerows have been removed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. However, the districts still retains a leafy, wooded character due to the number of hedgerows and pockets of woodland that still remain. There are few areas in the district where the horizon is not enclosed by trees and hedgerows. In general only in the south and west of Mid Suffolk, or around Thornham Park, are large woodlands a prominent landscape feature.

1.6.5 Undulation and River Valleys – The topography of Babergh is generally characterised by undulation, there are few truly flat areas. This can become more pronounced in the river valleys such as the Stour and Brett. This gentle undulation unlike many others parts of the county is sufficient to allow far reaching and elevated views in some locations.

1.6.6 Plateaux and River Valleys – The topography of Mid Suffolk is generally characterised by flat areas interspersed with rolling valleys. In particular elevated plateau landscapes are prominent in Mid Suffolk (for example: the landscape around Eye airfield).

1.6.7 Large areas of ‘Undeveloped’ Open Countryside – The landscape of Babergh is not dramatic in the sense of topographical changes but it is relatively unspoilt with large areas that are undeveloped. This sparse settlement pattern is an important part of the landscapes intrinsic character and adds to the sense of ‘ruralness’ and tranquillity.

- 1.6.8 Distinctive built heritage of Churches, Timber Framed buildings and Farmsteads – Due to the wealth created in the medieval period, both districts have a rich grouping of churches. These buildings can be particularly grand (such as Long Melford, Lavenham, Stoke by Nayland and Eye) dominating the surrounding landscape.
- 1.6.9 Parkland Landscapes - These historic designed landscapes make an important contribution to the character of the District. As a whole they are characteristic features of some of the Landscape Types of Babergh. Furthermore they are usually important for the setting of historic buildings as well being a Priority Habitat (BAP), in their own right.
- 1.6.10 Commons, Greens, Tyes and river valley grasslands – These areas of grassland can be small or large but add an interesting contrast to the arable land use in the districts. They are usually of historic significance. Many of the settlements are focussed on Greens or Tyes and may adjoin river valley grassland and commons. These are particularly attractive and rare landscape features and are usually locally prized for their scenic qualities and importance for biodiversity.
- 1.6.11 Artistic Association – Babergh is linked with nationally important artists such as Thomas Gainsborough John Constable and John Nash. It is for this reason that much of the district is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These artists captured the underlying character of the landscape.

## 2 GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

2.1 The guidance should be used in conjunction with the Suffolk Design Guide as it does not duplicate or supersede information contained therein.

2.1.1 In the countryside, buildings and their surroundings contribute to sense of place local and local distinctiveness in landscape, as well as local visual amenity. New buildings and other development including accesses car parking and domestic curtilage can have a significant adverse impact on the character of the countryside, unless sensitively designed and located they will erode the character of the landscape

Guidance is provided on the following:

- Sense of Place and Tranquillity
- Location/Siting of Development
- Design, Scale & Form of Development
- Materials
- Landscaping of Development

2.1.2 These generic issues apply to development proposals in the countryside such as agricultural buildings, barn conversions, buildings associated with recreational uses as well as residential developments etc.

Further specific guidance is also provided in respect of:

- Driveways & Car Parking
- Changes of Use
- Extensions to Dwellings
- Garden Extensions
- Village Edge Development
- Horse Keeping
- Development Essential for Utility Services & Energy Production
- Rural Lanes
- Signs and Advertisements

### 2.2 Sense of Place and Tranquillity

2.2.1 Some areas within Babergh appear to be remote, tranquil and removed from the noise and activity of busy roads and places. These intangible qualities contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of those areas and should be retained by:

- I. Avoiding the location of uses, which are visually intrusive
- II. Or, even if visual impacts can be minimised, that would create new activity and associated noise/disturbance that would be uncharacteristic.
- III. Avoiding development that would introduce and generate unacceptable levels of traffic on minor roads, particularly where it would lead to engineering works to improve the roads or alter their character.
- IV. Consider the impacts of development on the dark skies character of the countryside, the minimum levels of exterior lighting required should be used and full cut off lighting and to eliminate skyglow and LED directional light should be used to control light spillage.

## 2.3 Location/Siting of development (Visual effects)

2.3.1 Baberghs open and in some parts of Mid Suffolk the rolling farmland landscape with pockets of ancient woodlands can afford long distant views, which are a characteristic of the area. Development that may not appear to have an impact on its immediate surroundings may sometimes be conspicuous and have an impact in more distant views.

2.3.2 In considering development proposals, account should be taken of the potential impact of a new building or development in both immediate and distant views, particularly from roads, public footpaths and settlements. A landscape assessment may be required either a Landscape or Visual Appraisal or in some cases a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (in accordance with the Guidance on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). These assessments should be prepared by and experienced a qualified landscape professional, (see the Council's Local Validation List)

2.3.3 New development in the countryside should be carefully sited to ensure the best fit with the landscape and to minimise its impact on the appearance of the landscape. Development should be located:

- I. Away from ridge tops, upper valley slopes or prominent locations.
- II. Where existing mature planting can screen, filter or soften/ integrate (depending on what level is necessary to mitigate development) what is proposed.
- III. Where there is a backdrop of woodlands or valley side so the development does not break the skyline.
- IV. Below the skyline using dark materials to the roof (unless using a natural clay pan or plain tile).
- V. Close to woodlands or groups of buildings which can anchor the building
- VI. Sympathetically with the natural landform – and to avoid hard engineering solutions.

## 2.3.4 Location/Siting of development (Landscape/ Historic Landscape Character)

The Council will require special attention to be given to the siting, scale, design, materials, landscaping and general appearance of any new building or development in the countryside or on the edge of settlements so that its impact upon the character of the landscape is minimised. The following guidance applies:

- I. Development located on the edge of a settlement should be consistent with the form or shape of the settlement.
- II. The layout of new developments should seek to retain historic landscape features such as hedges trees and respect the existing patterns of vegetation and enclosure
- III. The design of domestic or small-scale buildings should be sympathetic to and reflect the characteristics of existing traditional buildings.
- IV. Development should avoid dominating other buildings or landscape features around it or detract from views of listed buildings or heritage assets.
- V. Measures should be taken to minimise the scale and dominance of large-scale buildings. Large buildings have the potential to dominate their

surroundings and are therefore difficult to accommodate within settlements without effective screening.

- 2.3.5 Where development is proposed on the edge of a village the proposal should be consistent with the way other buildings are orientated within the settlement pattern.
- 2.3.6 Normally this will involve the front of the building facing the public realm although in some circumstances consideration can be given to whether the development should be:
  - I. Inward looking to a village green or open space
  - II. Outward looking to a view from a ridge
  - III. Fronting or at right angles to a road or lane.
- 2.3.7 Both districts consist of clustered settlements with small hamlets and isolated farmsteads in the countryside. Many villages date from early settlements and land use, whilst others are the result of successful trading throughout the 16th to 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.3.8 Although there has been change and development of traditional buildings over time there is a consistency and continuity throughout the district, of both design and materials.

For example;

- I. Timber frames with lath and plaster
- II. Thatch roofing materials, reed thatch nearer the estuaries such as along the Waveney Valley and straw thatch more inland.
- III. Suffolk red and white bricks
- IV. Natural red clay plain and pantiles
- V. Natural slate

## 2.4 Materials

- 2.4.1 The use of local building methods and materials in the countryside is a major factor contributing to and reinforcing local distinctiveness. The type, texture and colour of local building materials contribute to an area's local character. The use of inappropriate materials, often modern, would affect the character and cumulatively erode local distinctiveness.
- 2.4.2 Timber frame with lime/ clay render and or Suffolk brick are predominate building materials of the district, weatherboarding (or clay lump), which was traditionally a cheap material, are common on agricultural buildings, outbuildings and some commercial buildings.
- 2.4.3 The council will promote the use of traditional materials in all development where this is practical.
- 2.4.4 For large-scale buildings such as modern agricultural buildings where the use of traditional materials is impractical, the use of modern materials for wall and roof claddings may be necessary. To make these buildings as inconspicuous as possible:
  - I. The wall materials should blend with the colours and textures of the landscape and should generally be dark green or brown, or black, grey green in colour, depending on the particular siting
  - II. The materials should be of a low-reflective finish.

- III. The roof of a rural building should be darker than the walls in order to help make the building appear smaller in scale. Green roofing or other “green” materials such as shingle will also be supported, where appropriate.
- IV. The use of ‘natural grey’ fibre cement roof cladding or concrete blocks is unlikely to be acceptable in any instance.

2.4.5 For details regarding the re-use of historic rural buildings the English Heritage has provided a comprehensive statement titled “Living Buildings in a Living Landscape - <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/living-buildings-in-living-landscape/>

## 2.5 **Landscaping of Development**

- 2.5.1 A landscaping scheme is likely to be required for planning proposals on the edge of settlements or in the countryside showing how it fits in the setting of the landscape. The local character of the landscape should inform species choice and design along with the findings of any Visual appraisal or LVIA. Advice on when this is necessary should be sought from a Development Management Planning Officer at the pre-application stage.
- 2.5.2 Appropriate landscaping of new development helps to ensure integration with its surroundings reduces its impact on the immediate and wider landscape and helps to retain the rural and distinctive character of an area.
- 2.5.3 Landscaping refers to planting, the treatment of ground surfacing and boundary divisions and to ground contouring. In the countryside and on the edge of settlements both the absence of/or inappropriate landscaping can result in development being conspicuous or urban in character and as a result, detract from the rural character of the area.
- 2.5.4 Landscaping treatment should best fit the location and achieve the purpose of the landscaping scheme, such as to screen the development from particular views, or to reinforce existing landscape features to improve the fit of the development in the landscape.
- 2.5.5 Proposals for new development should take into account the following, as appropriate:

## 2.6 **Planting**

- 2.6.1 Off-site tree planting can be used, where feasible, to mitigate the effects of new development from distant views. Whether on or off-site, planting in a series of clumps rather than a single tree belt can be more effective, particularly in open landscapes with limited tree cover
- 2.6.2 Links should be made with existing landscape features such as woodland, trees and hedges adjoining the development site.
- 2.6.3 Groups or belts of appropriate trees should be planted to soften the silhouettes of buildings and help integrate buildings with their surroundings.
- 2.6.4 Native tree and hedge species (as defined in the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and the Suffolk Hedgerow Survey 1998-2012) found in the locality should be used; conifers, particularly Leylandi hedging and ornamental tree species such as laurel would not be supported.

## **2.7 Boundary treatment**

- 2.7.1 Locally distinctive landscape features and planting, such as brick boundary walls and hedges of native species should be used in new development to define boundaries. Existing hedges, hedgerow trees and walls should be retained and walls should be repaired wherever possible.
- 2.7.3 Replacement and additional planting of hedges and hedgerow trees should be undertaken where possible to provide continuity of hedge and hedgerow tree cover.
- 2.7.3 On the edge of settlements, exposed rear boundaries to new development should be avoided.
- 2.7.4 Close-boarded fencing, ranch style fencing and over- ornate metal fences and gates create an urban effect and should be avoided in the countryside and on the edge of settlements in visible locations.
- 2.7.5 Ornate or grand gates and entrance can give a suburban appearance and are unlikely to be supported. Traditional gates, such as a five bar gates would be more likely to gain support.
- 2.7.6 Where fencing is necessary it should be rural in character and careful consideration should be given to its design and colour.
- 2.7.7 Where fencing is necessary, public-side planting should be included to mitigate the visual impact of the fencing

## **2.8 Driveways & Car Parking**

- 2.8.1 New accesses and hard surfaced areas such as driveways and farm tracks, service and car parking areas can be conspicuous, disrupt the landform and have an urbanising effect and alter the character of the countryside. Materials that may be acceptable in an urban setting may appear out of place in the countryside.
- 2.8.2 In order to minimise impacts the following should be applied;
  - I. Where a proposal comes forward for a new access, the applicant will need to demonstrate why an existing access route cannot be used or adapted.
  - II. Where the formation of a new access is necessary the location, design, width and surfacing should result in the access being inconspicuous and compatible with the rural character.
  - III. Hard surfaced areas should be appropriate in character to a rural area with the use of appropriate materials such as bound gravel or shingle.
  - IV. Large areas of car parking should be avoided; where necessary, landscaping e.g. planting of hedges and shrubs should be used to help break- up the expanse of materials and parking spaces should be left unmarked to give an informal character.
  - V. In particularly sensitive locations it is likely that innovative approaches will be required such as grid paving systems to retain green cover.

## **2.9 Change of use**

2.9.1 The principle of the change of use of buildings in the countryside to business and other uses may be acceptable in the context of Babergh Core Strategy Policy CS17 'The Rural Economy', Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focussed Review Policy FC3 'Rural Economy' and is supported by the NPPF paragraph 28. Detailed guidance on the conversion of buildings is addressed by Babergh Local Plan Policy CR18 and CR19 'Conversions.'

2.9.2 Where the conversion of buildings to new uses is acceptable in principle, careful consideration should be given to the potential impact of ancillary uses and paraphernalia such as car parking, outside storage, lighting and security fencing which may alter the rural character of the area. In order to avoid this:

Outside storage should where possible be avoided or be screened from view.

2.9.3 Any highways improvements should maintain the character and nature of rural roads in the area.

- I. Car parking should be unobtrusive
- II. External lighting should be given careful consideration (see lighting NPPF paragraph 125)
- III. Security fencing should, be avoided or be screened from view.

## **2.10 Extensions to Buildings**

2.10.1 Obtrusive alterations and extensions to buildings in the countryside can have a detrimental effect on the appearance and character of the landscape. The cumulative impact of several extensions to one building can significantly increase the potential obtrusiveness. Alterations and extensions to buildings in the countryside should be small in scale relative to the original building and sympathetically designed in relation to it and its surroundings. Extensions to buildings should:

- I. be subordinate to the original building.
- II. not have an obtrusive impact on the countryside
- III. be sympathetically designed in relation to the size, form, design and materials of the building to be extended.
- IV. retain sufficient curtilage space for the operational needs of the use and to avoid over development of the plot.

## **2.11 Garden Extensions**

2.11.1 All applications for "Change of Use" of land to garden will be controlled to ensure the landscape character and visual integrity is maintained, therefore the council will ensure that the extension is;

- I. not insular and integrates.
- II. proportionate in size to the existing plot size and its function as an amenity space to the dwelling.

- III. not a harmful intrusion into the countryside that jars with landscape features such as hedgerows, natural buildings lines etc. The visual intrusion of domestic paraphernalia and inappropriate boundary treatments should be avoided.

**2.12 Village Edge Development including proposals promoted under Babergh Core Strategy Policy CS11**

- 2.12.1 Where a new development adjoins an older development or open countryside, landscaping should seek to integrate with the locale by the choice of appropriate plant material and by the creation of new landscape features, taking advantage of existing contours or features

2.12.2 Proposals on the outskirts of villages should have regards to the following;

- I. Whether the proposal would constitute harmful ribbon development on the edge of the village
- II. The magnitude of change to the countryside e.g. hedges, woodland etc... needs to be cleared having an adverse impact on the character of the settlement and/or countryside
- III. The scale, density, form, extent of landscaping and character of the proposal in relation to the existing adjoining development
- IV. Whether the proposal constitutes a logical extension of the built-up area of the village and can be both physically and visually contained
- V. Whether the proposal would result in the logical infilling of a gap between two buildings or conversely, whether the proposal would harmfully fill an important gap
- VI. Whether the proposal is visually well related to the settlement it abuts and has logical, natural boundaries e.g. existing hedgerows, woodland and other landscape features i.e. it does not encroach into open countryside.
- VII. Whether the proposal is positioned appropriately within the landscape, in particular having regard to the visual impact of the character of the immediate area e.g. rolling, undulating, plateau, valley or farmland.

**2.13 Equestrian (commercial/ non-commercial)**

- 2.13.1 Recreational and commercial equestrian uses may be acceptable in the countryside. Where such uses are acceptable, measures should be taken to minimise the visual impact on the landscape as follows:

- I. Development should be sited in inconspicuous locations e.g. close to existing buildings or woodlands or in the corner of fields.
- II. Development should be sited near to the point of access in order to minimise the need for access tracks to be created across open fields.

- III. Existing buildings should be used wherever possible and any new buildings should be constructed of wood so as to be relatively easy to dismantle when they are no longer needed and are in keeping with the character of the countryside.
- IV. Buildings should be as small as possible i.e. no larger than the minimum size required for the number of horses stabled.
- V. The design and materials of the buildings and structures should be in keeping with their surroundings. Fencing should be of an unobtrusive material such as brown or green tape, white tape is unacceptable due to the negative visual impact.
- VI. Long runs of fencing should be broken up by soft landscaping
- VII. Outside storage and parking of vehicles such as horseboxes should be avoided where possible unless the location is very well screened.
- VIII. Access tracks and hard standing areas etc. should be of the minimum size necessary, and should not encroach into the countryside
- IX. Development should have access to a bridleway, or network or riding routes for clients on private land.

## 2.14 Development Essential for Utility Services and Energy Generation

- 2.14.1 Babergh Core Strategy Policy CS13 provides guidance on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Local Plan Policy CR03 Communications within an AONB and the NPPF paragraph 42 Communications Infrastructure. Radio telecommunications masts and other utility and energy generating structures can be obtrusive in the landscape and visible in long distance views, particularly in prominent locations such as on sky lines around the valleys and basins, on ridges and in areas with few buildings. In order to mitigate against this and minimise their effect on the landscape, telecommunication masts and other utility and energy generating structures should where possible;
- 2.14.2 Be sited away from prominent locations so as not to feature conspicuously in and detract from long distance views or the setting of settlements.
- 2.14.3 Be sited where they are seen in relation to existing built or natural features, which would provide a mitigating visual effect on the scale of the structure, concerned.
- 2.14.4 Be of a low-reflective finish and of a colour appropriate to their setting in the landscape.

## 2.15 Rural Lanes

- 2.15.1 To conserve the character of rural/green lanes the district Council will seek to retain the traditional landscape, tranquillity and nature conservation character of these landscape features, including their associated hedges, coppice stools, verges, banks and ditches. Any proposal that would adversely affect the physical appearance of a rural lane, or give rise to an unacceptable increase in the amount of traffic using them or an unacceptable level of associated activity, noise or disturbance arising as a result of the development would be inappropriate.

## 2.16 Signs and Advertisements

2.16.1 The proliferation of signage in the countryside, especially in locations remote from the business or premise being advertised can erode the rural character. Generally, in the countryside signs should be used sparing and will only be permitted in close proximity to the business premises/service being advertised. Where signage is considered to be acceptable in principle, the sign/advert should be subtle, be the minimum reasonably necessary to advertise the business/site and be sensitively designed using appropriate materials and finishes. Where a number of businesses operate from a site, then a single sign should be used to advertise the premises rather than a series of individual designs of different designs and finishes.

## Annexe

### Babergh Conservation Areas (CA)

Bildeston, Boxford, Brent Eleigh, Brettenham, Bures St Mary, Chelsworth, Cockfield (Cross Green), East Bergholt, Glemsford, Great Waldingfield, Hadleigh, Hartest, Higham, Kersey, Kettlebaston, Lavenham, Little Waldingfield, Long Melford, Monks Eleigh, Naughton, Nayland, Pin Mill, Polstead, Shotley Gate, Stoke By Nayland, Stratford St Mary, Sudbury, Thorington Street, Woolverstone

### Mid Suffolk Conservation Areas (CA)

Badley, Beyton, Botesdale/Rickinghall, Coddernham, Debenham, Drinkstone Mills, Eye, Felsham, Farningham, Fressingfield, Haughley, Hoxne, Hunston, Laxfield, Mellis, Mendlesham, Metfield, Needham Market, Palgrave, Rattlesden, Redgrave, Stowmarket, Stradbroke, Tostock, Thrandeston, Walsham-le-Willows, Wattisfield, Wetheringsett, Wickham Skeith, Wingfield, Woolpit.



# **Babergh**

# **Landscape**

# **Character Areas**

### 3 The Landscape Character of Babergh – An Overview

The landscape of the District is distinct from other parts of the County particularly because of its landform and river system, woodland cover and historic development. Much of the county south of the River Gipping is incised by a series of tributaries of the River Stour. These rivers have created a rolling and undulating landscape that is much more dissected than that of North Suffolk. Therefore the clay soils are better draining and on these steeper slopes, and the rivers have been able to support many mills. It is also notable that Stour is sufficiently large that it was able to support a significant navigation. Finally, the better draining soils have also meant that these south Suffolk claylands were amenable to early arable agriculture, so land was brought into production in the early medieval period and woodland was retained in parcels throughout the landscape.

This rich natural endowment has meant that the district has historically had a flourishing and prosperous agricultural sector which supported a range of other industries such as brick making. It is this prosperity that has allowed the creation of a locally distinctive built heritage and number of parkland estates across the district. The closeness to Ipswich and the wealth created by industries such as brewing and manufacturing supported the creation of a number of estates and designed parklands particularly on the Shotley Peninsula, in addition to those around Long Melford.

It appears that this local distinctiveness has deep roots. The ‘Gipping divide’<sup>2</sup> has also been recently recognised as being a significant historic cultural boundary. The areas on either side differ in the proportion of land formerly held in common fields, in the way their vernacular buildings were constructed and laid out, in their terminology for common pasture and woods and in their inheritance customs. The patterns seen in south Suffolk extend into Essex and those in north Suffolk extend into Norfolk, indicating that this was a boundary of regional importance that has a greater cultural significance than the existing county boundaries.

<sup>2</sup>For more detail, see: E. Martin & M. Satchell, *Wheare most Inclosures be. East Anglian Fields: History, Morphology and Management*, East Anglian Archaeology 124, 2008).

## **Landscape Characters for areas within the Babergh District**

The Landscape Guidance has used the Landscape Character Assessment areas as defined by Suffolk County Council and then included information and detail to ensure each Landscape character is clearly relating to the Babergh District.

### **01) Ancient Estate Claylands**

Bentley, Capel St Mary, Copdock and Washbrook and Raydon

### **02) Ancient Estate Farmlands**

Chelmondiston (Pin Mill) (CA), Belstead, Bentley, Freston, Holbrook, Shotley, Tattingstone, Wherstead and Woolverstone (CA)

### **03) Ancient Plateau Claylands**

Aldham, Burstall, Elmsett, Hintlesham, Naughton (CA), Nedging Tye, Wattisham, Whatfield

### **04) Ancient Rolling Farmlands**

Acton, Assington, Bildeston (CA), Boxford (CA), Brettenham (CA), Cockfield (Cross Green) (CA), Edwardstone, Great Waldingfield, Kersey (CA), Lavenham (CA), Leavenheath, Little Cornard, Little Waldingfield (CA) Newton, Polstead Heath, Preston St Mary and Stoke by Nayland (CA) Thorpe Morieux,

### **11) Plateau Estate Farmlands**

Stutton

### **12) Plateau Farmlands**

Brantham, Capel St Mary, East Bergholt (CA), Great Wenham, Holton St Mary and Lower Raydon

### **15) Rolling Estate Farmlands**

Harkstead, Holbrook, Long Melford (CA), Shotley, Shotley Gate (CA), Tattingstone, Wherstead

### **18) Rolling Valley Farmlands**

Belstead Brook, Bildeston (CA), Boxford (CA), Brantham, Brent Eleigh (CA), Bures St Mary (CA), Burstall (CA), Chelsworth (CA), East Bergholt (CA), Edwardstone, Hadleigh (CA), Higham (CA), Kersey (CA), Kettlebaston (CA), Lavenham (CA), Long Melford (CA), Upper Layham, Lower Layham, Monks Eleigh (CA), Nayland (CA), Polstead (CA), Shelley, Shimpling, Sproughton, Stanstead, Stoke by Nayland (CA), Stratford St Mary (CA), Sudbury (CA) and Thorington Street (CA)

### **23) Undulating Ancient Farmlands**

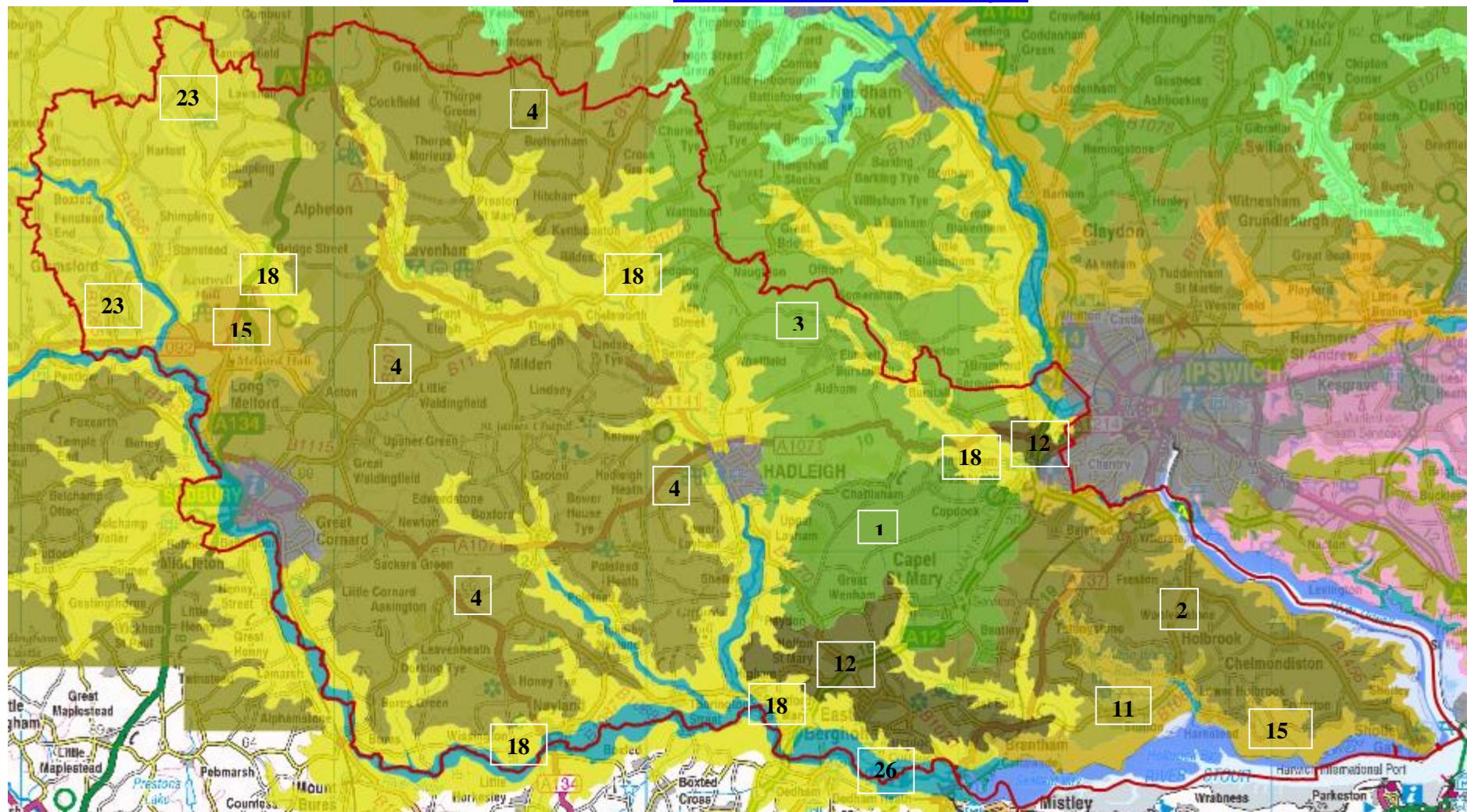
Boxted, Glemsford (CA), Hartest (CA), Lawshall, Shimpling Street, Stanstead

### **26) Valley Meadowlands**

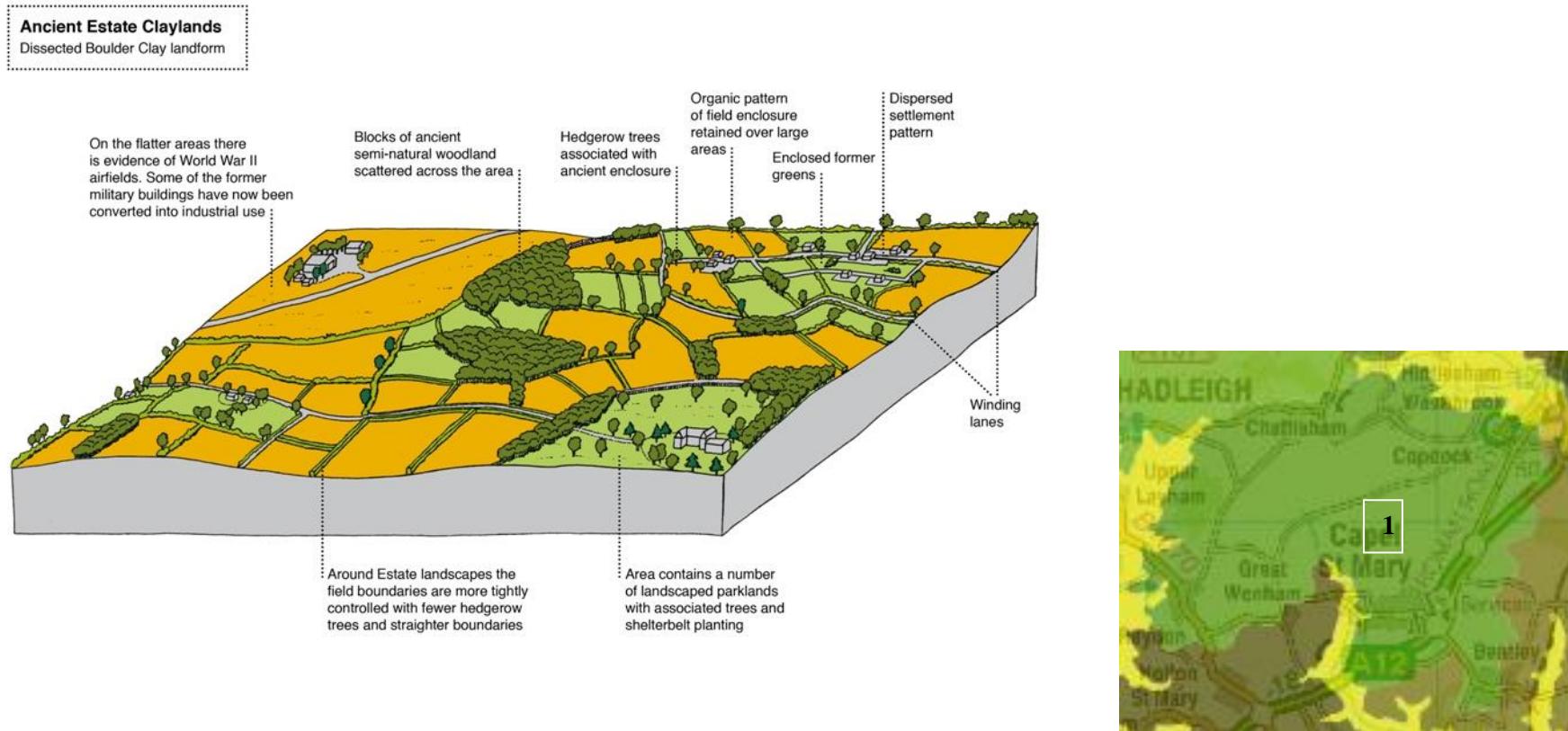
Brantham, Bures St Mary (CA), Harkstead, Long Melford (CA), Nayland (CA), Shelley and Stratford St Mary (CA)

## Map of Babergh Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment

Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>



## (1) – Ancient Estate Claylands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

**Babergh villages and towns** - Bentley, Capel St Mary, Copdock and Washbrook and Raydon

## **Key Characteristics**

Gently rolling heavy clay plateaux with ancient woodlands and parklands - This landscape type occurs on the eastern side of the Suffolk claylands and is formed from glacial till and boulder clay left behind by the great Anglian Glaciations. In Babergh District it is found in a small area to the east of Hadleigh.

## **Landscape Character**



Raydon – former WWII airfield

V. The majority of this landscape character is visually open and expansive; however, there are areas of tall hedges and winding lanes which provide a more quiet and enclosed amenity.

- I. Fields are medium to large, and hedges vary from large with a mix of trees and shrubs to single species hedges.
- II. Blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland are scattered throughout the area, made up of oak, ash, field maple, hornbeam and small leaved lime. In particular there is Raydons Great Wood, Bentley Long Wood and Brockley Wood.
- III. Small streams and rivers such as Dodnash Brook, Spring Brook and Belstead Brook all provide a physical variation to this landscape.
- IV. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the flat landscape at Raydon was utilised for World War II airfields having a significant local visual impact.



By Dodnash Brook, Bentley

## **Settlement Character**

- I. Settlement pattern is scattered consisting of various sized small villages, dispersed hamlets and isolated farmsteads.

- II. Capel St Mary is a core village in close proximity to the A12. The village of mixed development is well screened by hedgerows and trees and is surrounded by agricultural fields.
- III. Raydon has a ribbon settlement pattern that follows the narrow winding path of the main road to Hadleigh from East Bergholt. With a mix of old and new developments surrounded by mature hedges and trees the village sit seamlessly within the landscape. .
- IV. Bentley is more of a clustered development surrounded by small fields with hedge boundaries and woodland. .
- V. Copdock and Washbrook consist of a sporadic settlement pattern with pockets of nucleated development separated by a quiet narrow winding lane and the old A12 road. With a mix of old and new developments surrounded by mature hedges and agricultural fields, the villages are nestled within the landscape without overly intruding on the countryside surrounding them.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the clayland landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the settlement pattern

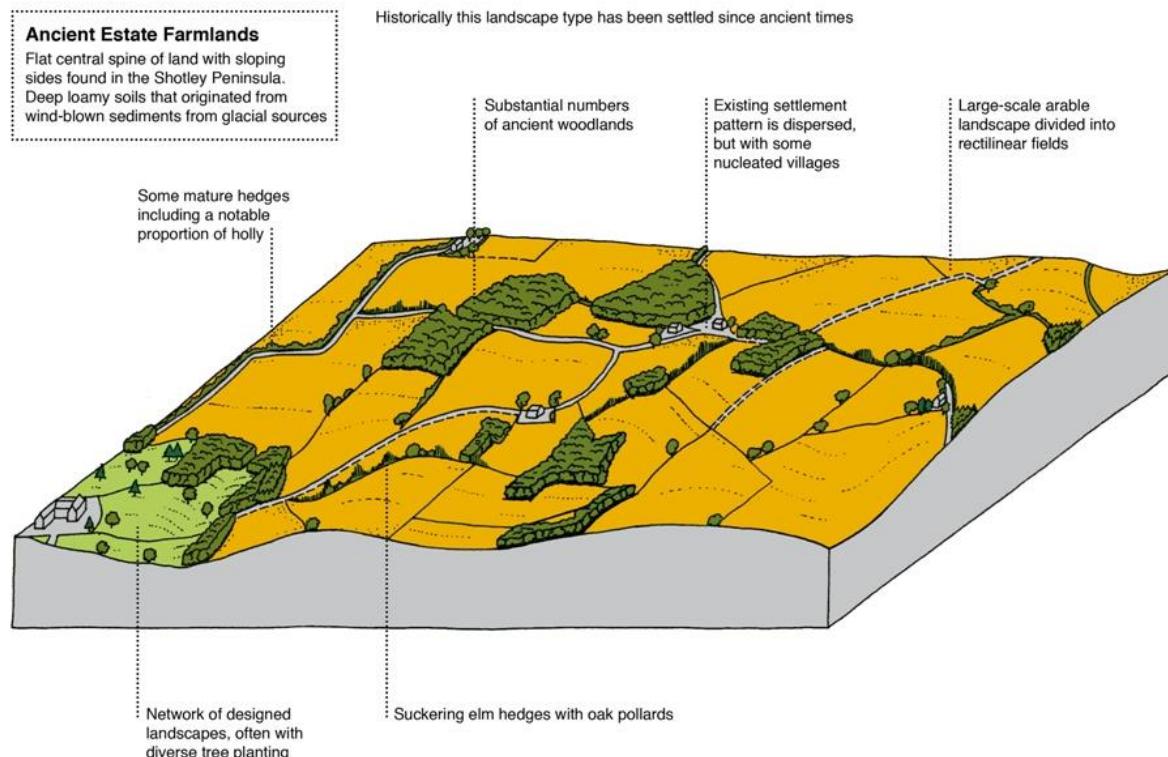
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape area and distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained where appropriate.
- To safeguard the ancient woodlands and hedges

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Maintain the integrity of the individual distinctive settlement patterns, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- II. Ancient woodlands and old existing hedge lines are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.

## (2) – Ancient Estate Farmlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns –

Chelmondiston (Pin Mill) (CA), Belstead, Bentley, Freston, Holbrook, Shotley, Tattingstone, Wherstead and Woolverstone (CA)

## **Key Characteristics**

A plateau of easily farmed rich loams with a planned estate layout and blocks of ancient woodland - Although not part of the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB area this is considered an “Additional Project Area” which is managed by the AONB Partnership to protect and enhance the landscape and heritage. It should be noted that the Ancient Estate Farmlands is only found on the Shotley Peninsula. The fertile and easily worked soils created from windblown glacial soils are both fertile and easily worked, therefore the area has was very attractive to early farmers and holds a very high density of Neolithic and bronze age sites and remains. The land continued to be prized for its fertility and has been modified and “modernised” on successive occasions. This combination of a long period of cultivation and the focus on “agricultural improvement” has created a landscape with a pattern of rectilinear “modern” fields (18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> C), scattered with blocks of Ancient Woodland, (woodland known to pre-date 1600), that are more usually found in the “ancient” countryside of the claylands.

### **Landscape Character**

- I. This landscape type is only found inland of the Shotley Peninsula which extends from Bentley north to Belstead and Wherstead and south to Holbrook, Harkstead and Shotley and includes Tattingstone Valley now known as the Alton Water reservoir. The character consists of an elongated, elevated and relatively flat central spine with sloping sides where it is dissected by river valleys or meets the Orwell Estuary.



View from Dodnash Woods, Bentley



Farmland, estuary view and Harkstead

- II. The quality of the soil for farming had a significant impact on the character of the landscape with the introduction of farms and settlements and the pattern of the land is characterised by large-scale arable blocks divided into rectilinear fields. Agricultural writers of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century considered the rich loamy soil as the best in the country. There are some locally distinctive hedges of holly with pollarded oaks, while suckering elm is usually very dominant on the lightest soil.
- III. The area also has a substantial number of ancient woodlands, some up to 80ha in size. In the west there is the close grouping of Great and Little Martin’s Woods, Dodnash Wood and Holly Wood in Bentley; Old

Hall Wood on Bentleys northern boundary close to Spinney Wood and Wherstead Wood, Freston Park, Holbrook Park and Cutler's Wood to the east and smaller wooded areas such as Rence Park, in the south.

- IV. The valley surrounded by Dodnash woods and Martins Glen has considerable scenic value with its variations in land form which is complemented by a mosaic of pasture, heath and woodlands, resulting in a particularly rich landscape.
- V. The open landscape has retained the influence of the Victorian era with the pattern of the fields, parklands and pockets of woodland providing a strong feature in some areas.

### **Settlement Character**

- I. Parkland landscapes around large houses overlooking the estuary are a key feature to the landscape however, some of these parkland areas have been broken up, and in particular, Tattingstone Park has been largely lost to the Alton Water Reservoir.
- II. Woolverstone has a ribbon pattern of development with well-spaced out dwellings surrounded by open fields and parkland. They are set back from the main road and are of predominantly red brick, white joinery and gable features.



Alton Water

III. Pin Mill is a designated conservation area (see Conservation Area Appraisals) however, the adjoining village of Chelmondiston has not had the same level of protection and now supports mixed development surrounded by agricultural fields. Sections of mature trees and hedging soften areas along the roadside throughout the village.

IV. From Chelmondiston to Shotley the main road travels through open countryside framed by hedgerows and areas of woodland with pockets of farmsteads set well back from the road and isolated dwellings sporadically located, providing a rural tranquil atmosphere.

V. Shotley was an industrial area in Victorian times and consists of

mixed development in the form of infill and estates. With views from both the Orwell and Stour estuary any development would be visually significant on the coastal setting.

- VI. The (C class) road between Shotley and Holbrook along the southern side is mainly single track with settlements and farmsteads of Erwarton, Harkstead and Lower Holbrook, and coastal views across the Stour estuary. There are a number of high hedges with partial shelter, however, the general feel along this stretch of the land is one of being very exposed to the elements
- VII. Holbrook is a large village within this landscape and has accommodated mixed development extending along the northern end of Alton Water Reservoir. The village is set amongst mature hedges, trees, woodland and spinneys.
- VIII. Tattingstone has seen modern development on a smaller scale and encompasses small estate homes amongst mature hedges, trees and woodlands.
- IX. Bentley is more of a clustered development surrounded by small fields with hedge boundaries and woodland.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular safeguarding the Victorian and parkland features of the area.

### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape and ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained where appropriate.
- To reinforce hedgerows of locally native species, in particular holly, oak and suckering elm.
- To safeguard the ancient woodland and parkland areas
- To safeguard the mosaic pattern of pasture, heath and woodlands

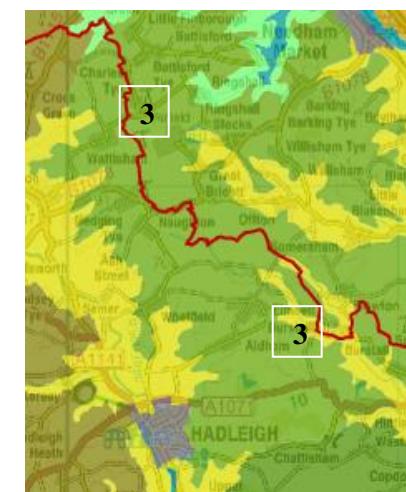
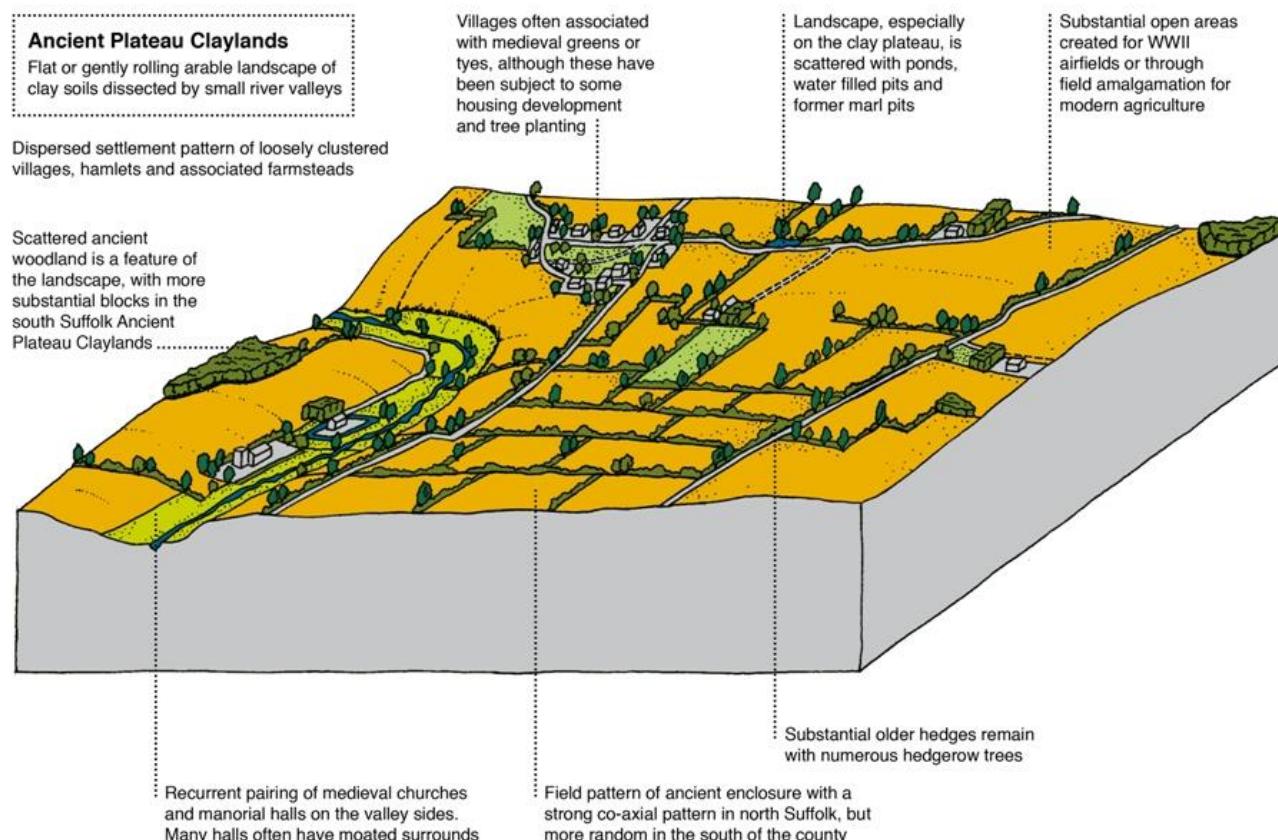
### **Materials and Architecture**

The Council will support the use of natural facing and roofing materials and architecture that reflects the local character of the countryside setting. An example of the types of materials that would be considered supportable are: Suffolk red and white brick, painted brickwork and render, black timber weatherboarding to outbuildings and agricultural buildings, plaintile, natural slate and natural red clay pantiles.

## **Key Design Principles**

- I. Retain local rural character and Victorian character by ensuring all new development to be in keeping with the landscape setting and the nationally designated AONB.
- II. Reinforce and restore or where appropriate create the estate and parkland characteristics in new developments.
- III. Any development that impacts upon the historic parkland will be accompanied by a management plan or other detailed evidence, including a detailed scheme of mitigation and enhancement, to support the proposals.
- IV. Whenever possible incorporate existing landscape features such as tree belts woodland or hedge lines into the design and layout of development proposals such that the locally characteristic patterns can be retained within new land uses
- V. This is quite an open landscape with the potential for any form of development to be visibility intrusive if it has been designed without sufficient, locally appropriate, screening or an appropriate landscape design plan
- VI. With views from both the Orwell and Stour estuary any development would be visually significant on the coastal setting the majority of which is AONB. Ensure new development integrates with the settlement.
- VII. To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for on and off site landscaping including enhancing field boundaries with local hedging and tree species.

### (3) – Ancient Plateau Claylands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

**Villages and towns** – Aldham, Burstall, Elmsett, Hintlesham, Naughton (CA), Nedging Tye, Wattisham, Whatfield

## Key Characteristics

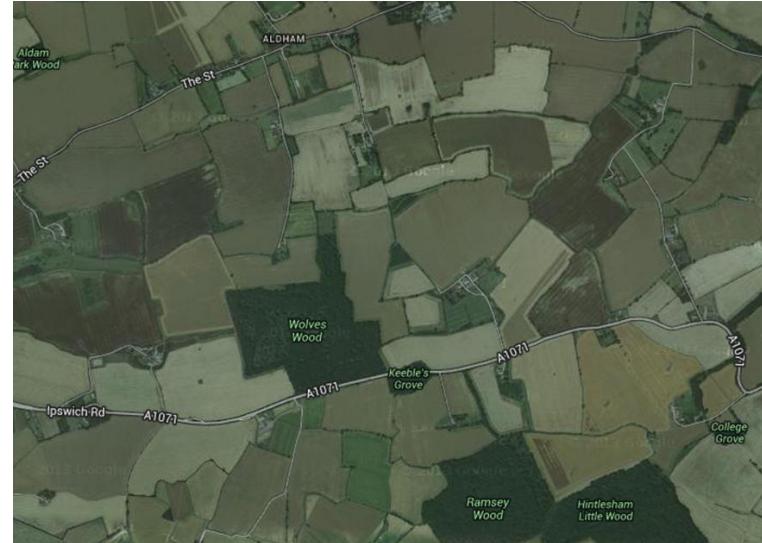
Gently rolling heavy clay plateaux with ancient woodlands – In Babergh District This landscape type occurs south of the Gipping Valley but straddles the border extending northward into Mid Suffolk.

## Landscape Character

- I. The top of the plateau is generally flat or only gently undulating, with attractive small valleys. Towards the edges it is more dissected with greater more complex slopes.
- II. Land cover is predominantly arable farmland retaining much of the older field patterns of irregular partitions along with numerous areas of pasture land with generous sized woodland cover and established hedgerows.
- III. Some areas have experienced large losses of hedgerow due to changing agricultural practices resulting in the creation of open “prairie” landscapes.



## Gently undulating landscape towards Wolves Wood



### Irregular field patterns (Google maps, 2014)

IV. The ancient and plantation woodlands that cover this landscape character consist of; Wolves Wood in Aldham, Ramsey Wood and Hintlesham Great Wood near Hintlesham.

V. Overall the landscape has a woodland amenity due to the strong feeling of enclosure resulting from large hedges and ancient woodlands in an otherwise arable dominant landscape. .

VI. Airfields are a recurring feature and within this landscape character in Babergh; there is Wattisham airfield which

has a significant visual impact due to the level topography in this area.

## Settlement Character

- I. Scattered settlement pattern ranging from farmsteads, clustered development of various sizes to the elongation (ribbon development) of larger groups.
- II. Hintlesham Hall sits within the remnants of Parkland providing a strong and positive impact within this landscape character.
- III. The narrow road through this landscape character travels through open countryside framed by hedgerows and areas of woodland and with pockets of farmsteads set well back from the road and isolated villages with a ribbon settlement pattern sporadically located. Providing a quiet and rural atmosphere.
- IV. Soft landscaping has ensured existing settlements are well screened and do not have a negative visual impact of this flat landscape character

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the woodland, parkland and prairie landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

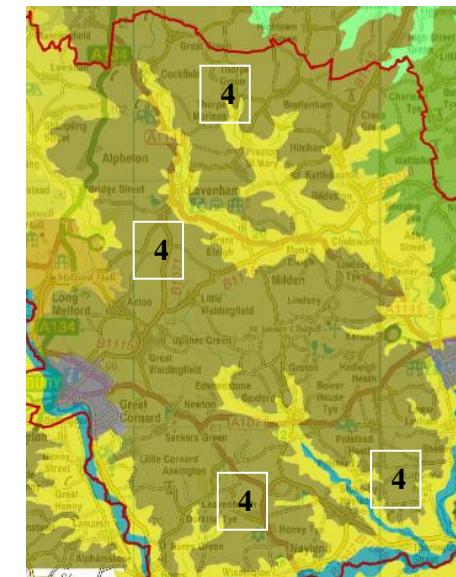
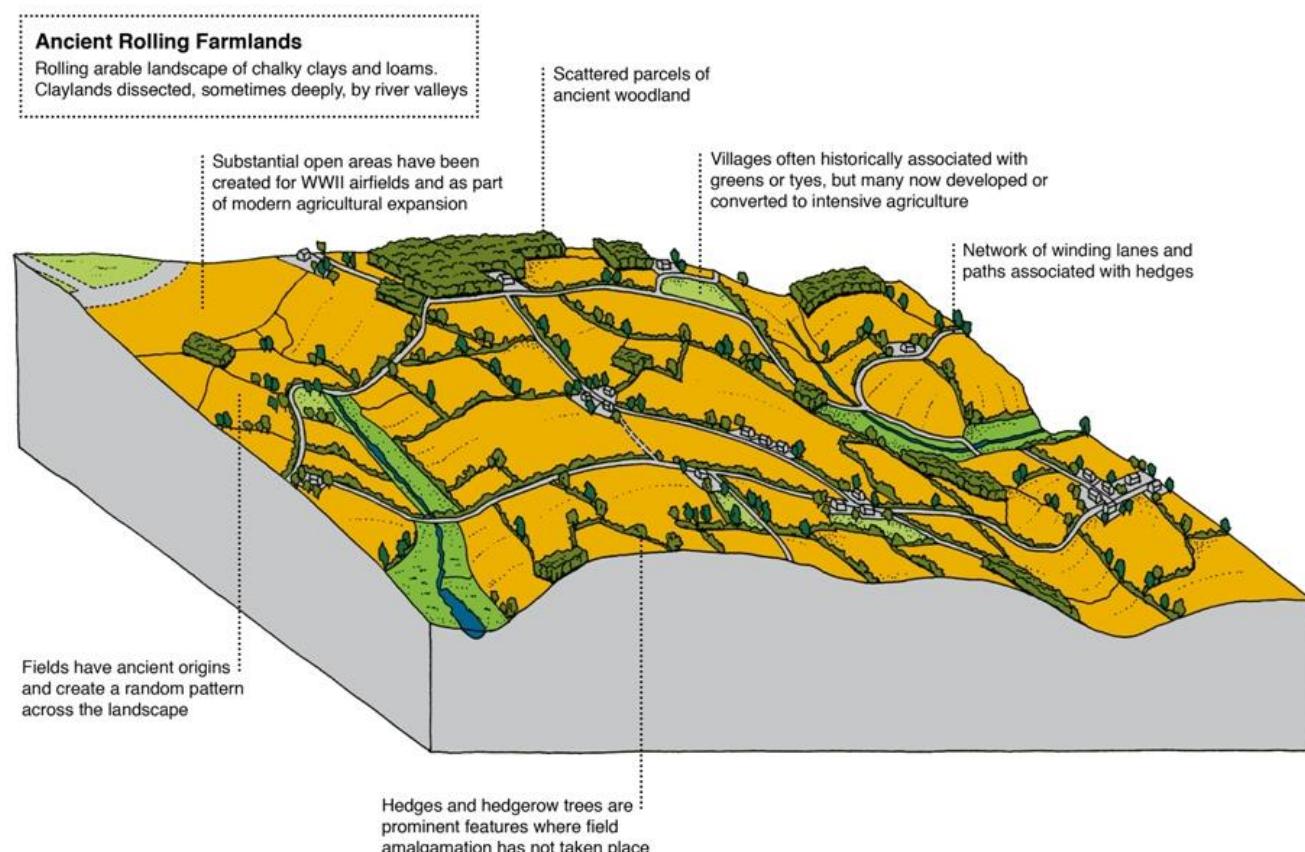
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas and settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained where appropriate.
- To reinforce and enhance the existing field boundaries
- To safeguard the plantation and ancient woodland areas
- Safeguard the parkland area

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. This is quite open landscape with the potential of any form of development to be visibility intrusive if it has been designed without sufficient screening or an appropriate landscape design plan
- II. Reinforce enhance, restore or where locally appropriate create the estate and parkland characteristics in new developments
- III. Any development that impacts upon the historic parkland will be accompanied by a management plan or other detailed evidence, including a detailed scheme of mitigation and enhancement, to support the proposals.
- IV. Whenever possible incorporate existing landscape features such as tree belts woodland or hedge lines into the design and layout of development proposals such that the locally characteristic patterns can be retained within new land uses
- V. Ancient woodlands and old existing hedge lines are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- VI. To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for landscaping.

## (4) – Ancient Rolling Farmlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

**Villages and towns** - Acton, Assington, Bildeston (CA), Boxford (CA), Brettenham (CA), Cockfield (Cross Green) (CA), Edwardstone, Great Waldingfield, Kersey (CA), Lavenham (CA), Leavenheath, Little Cornard, Little Waldingfield (CA) Newton, Polstead Heath, Preston St Mary and Stoke by Nayland (CA) Thorpe Morieux,

## **Key Characteristics**

A rolling landscape of medium clay soils studded with blocks of ancient woodland – this landscape type encompasses a large area of the Babergh District including to the south the Dedham Vale AONB, River Stour Project, Polstead and Stoke by Nayland, continuing west as far as Little Cornard to the eastern side of Hadleigh and north through Cockfield and beyond the boundary of the District.

### **Landscape Character**

- I. The rolling clayland landscape is dissected by river valleys including The Brett and Box.
- II. In some areas deposits of glacial sand and gravel produced heathland which were enclosed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, only the names are left to denote these areas such as Babergh Heath in Great Waldingfield, Cornard Heath, Castling's Heath and Parliament Heath in Groton, Leavenheath and Polstead Heath.
- III. Ancient and species-rich hedgerows (mainly oak, ash and field maple, with suckering elm) and associated ditches have a strong visual impact as they are frequently high and wide.
- IV. Ancient woodland is scattered throughout in blocks consisting largely of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash, holly and elm. The woodlands provide strong visual features within the landscape.



Rolling Landscape and extensive field amalgamations near Kersey



Panoramic views overlooking Chelsworth

- V. Between Hadleigh and Sudbury orchards are a more prominent feature.
- VI. Although there are some extensive field amalgamations resulting in a much more open landscape, overall the landscape is largely intact, and accessible through a dense network of winding roads and wide verges.
- VII. At Lavenham and Chilton there are areas of flat interfluves (area between valleys that is adjacent to a watercourse) which were used for military airfields in World War II.
- VIII. The current crop production of cereals and oilseed rape and increasing equine use has a significant visual impact on the landscape.
- IX. Wide panoramic views are offered in all directions of the compass from this landscape character.



Kersey Church

## Settlement Character

- I. The settlement pattern mainly consists of dispersed farmsteads of mediaeval origin with the some larger hamlets and small villages that complement the rural land form and landscape.
- II. There are frequent occurrences of small to moderate sized greens. Some have been enclosed and even lost through infill development over the years, however, the remaining open spaces are very important as they shape the relationship of buildings to each other and define the form of settlements.
- III. Acton has a clustered settlement pattern set amongst rolling farmland. Significantly built up throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century with only a few listed buildings on the edges of the village this is an isolated setting.
- IV. Assington has a ribbon form of development broken up by orchards and farmland, concentrated along The Street, providing a quiet and tranquil atmosphere.



Small narrow winding lane following the rolling pattern of the landscape, towards Hadleigh



River Box

V. With its' narrow streets, historic buildings, brick and flint walls and the square, Bildeston has retained a picturesque village atmosphere nestled within the valley as has the historic villages of Boxford and Kersey.

VI. The small narrow winding lanes and roads that pass through the villages of this landscape character retain the tranquil, rural feel with only the occasional small hamlet or isolated farmstead to break up this gently rolling landscape

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular safeguarding the influences of the area.

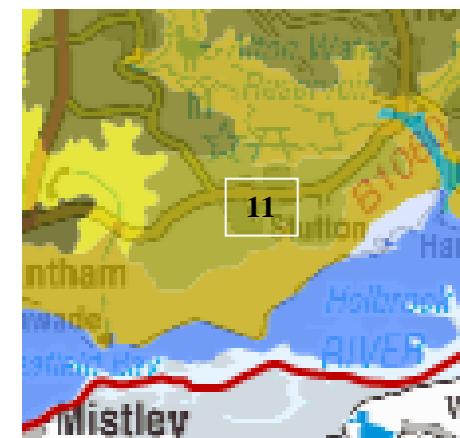
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- To reinforce hedgerows of locally native species and retain the existing field boundaries.
- To safeguard the ancient hedgerow and woodland areas
- To safeguard the orchard areas

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. There are significant sized areas of open landscape providing wide panoramic views, with the potential of any form of development to be visibility intrusive if it has been designed without sufficient screening, appropriate landscape design plan or appropriate siting.
- II. Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- III. Retain rural character of the small settlements, by avoiding the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials and features; conservation areas and areas that fall within the AONB are particularly sensitive in this respect
- IV. Minimise the cumulative visual impact of equine development and ancillary equipment within this landscape character.
- V. Restore, maintain and enhance Greens and Tyes, orchards and woodland areas.
- VI. Hedging for boundaries will be designed to reflect the local character of exiting planting to minimise the landscape and visual impacts on the distinctive character of the area.
- VII. To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for on and off site landscaping including enhancing field boundaries with local hedging and tree species.

## (11) – Plateau Estate Farmlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

**Villages and towns - Stutton**

## **Key Characteristics**

A distinct landscape, within the district, of large regular fields with small woodlands on light loamy soils

### **Landscape Character**

- I. Only found in one small area of the district, on the southern edge of the Shotley peninsula around Stutton.
- II. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century landscape park and enclosed fields bounded by straight hedge lines are a common feature.
- III. Hedges and coverts provide an enclosed feel to the parkland and surrounding area.



### **Settlement Character**

- I. Stutton has two small clustered developments, separated by a field, with a modern estate and some former development along small narrow lanes that follow the lines of the field boundaries. Hedging, trees and woodland provide shelter and help to retain the rural appearance to the small village.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular safeguarding the influences of the area.

### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- To reinforce hedgerows of locally native species and retain the existing field boundaries.

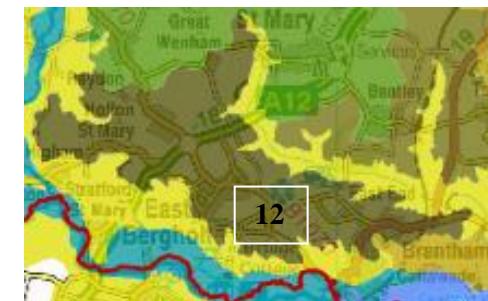
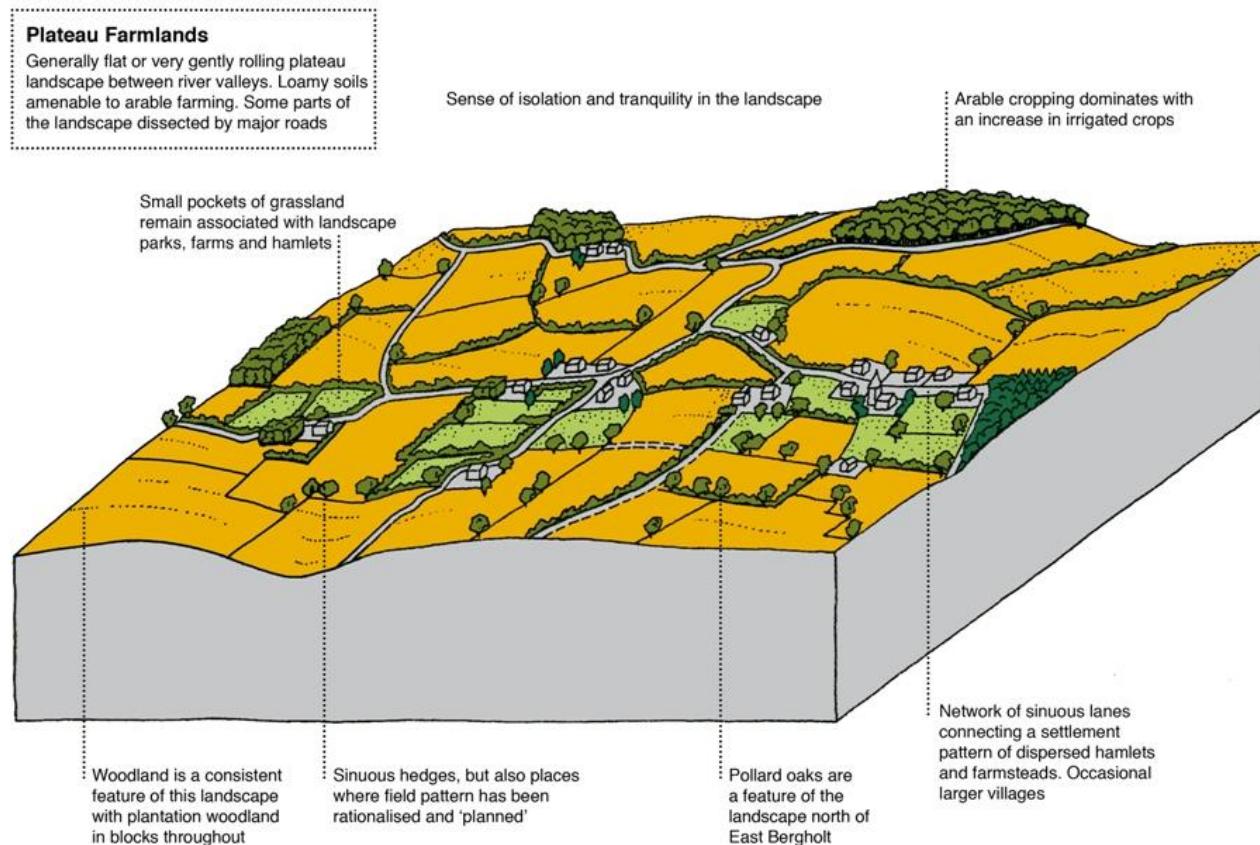
### **Materials**

- Suffolk red and white brick, black and white timber weatherboarding, plaintile, natural slate, natural red clay pantiles,

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Retain rural character of the small settlement and to complement the nationally designated AONB by avoiding the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials and features.
- II. Any development that impacts upon the historic parkland will be accompanied by a management plan or other detailed evidence to support the proposals.

## (12) – Plateau Farmlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

**Villages and towns -** Branham, Capel St Mary, East Bergholt (CA), Great Wenham, Holton St Mary and Lower Raydon

## **Key Characteristics**

A locally distinct area consisting of a plateau of medium soils with a mix of 'ancient' and 'planned' countryside

### **Landscape Character**



Plateau farmland near Holton St Mary

- I. Located within a small section of the Babergh District including part within the designated Dedham Vale AONB.
- II. The landscape character consists of plateaux that are flat or gently rolling with areas of "ancient countryside" with old, sinuous hedge lines.
- III. The quality of the soil lends the landscape to predominantly arable use resulting in substantial areas with straight boundaries designed as "planned landscape".
- IV. Plantation woodlands that would be associated with landscape parks are a regular feature in this landscape character.
- V. The area has a strong sense of ruralness with a network of quiet lanes and tall hedgerows although these features are compromised by the effects of the A12.
- VI. Raydon whilst located within this area the landscape does not contain the same features due to its former airfield use. It is not characteristic of the wider area.



East Bergholt and Brantham from the Estuary

East Bergholt and have, over time, become more like individual housing clusters.

III. Capel St Mary is a core village in close proximity to the A12. The village of mixed development is well screened by hedgerows and trees and is surrounded by agricultural fields.

IV. Brantham has experienced development throughout the twentieth century and contains a large area of historic industrial land which has been largely vacated. Brantham has been designated as an area for Strategic Development within the Core Strategy (Policy CS10). Located between two AONB's all future development should be considered with regard to the potential visual impact on both AONBs and the views from across the Stour Estuary. .

V. Great Wenham is a small nucleated village surrounded by open arable farmland which provides panoramic views of the surrounding countryside.

VI. Holton St Mary and Raydon have a ribbon settlement pattern that follows the narrow winding path of the main road to Hadleigh from East Bergholt. With a mix of old and new developments surrounded by mature hedges and trees the villages sit seamlessly within the landscape.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and where appropriate restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character and in particular safeguard the visual impact on the AONB.

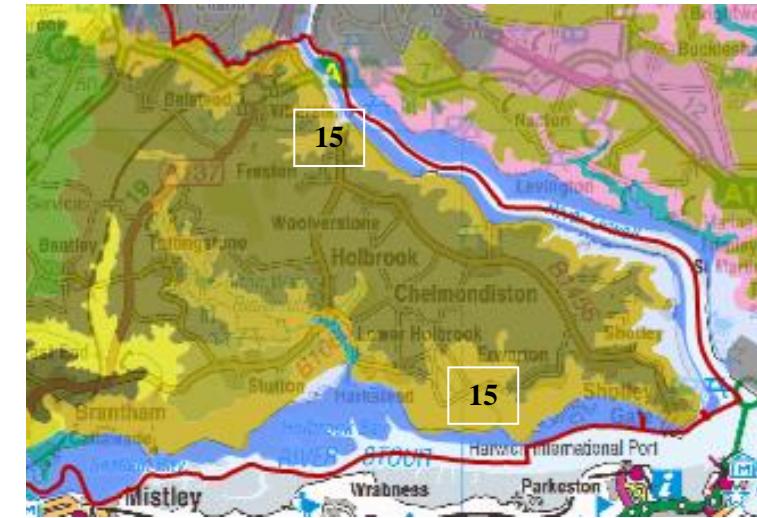
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. The area is located either within or abuts an AONB therefore any development or change of use must conserve the character of the nationally designated landscape.
- II. The plateau landscape retains a scenic quality providing panoramic views and distinctive character with historical features. All forms of development will need to ensure visual impact is characteristic for the area.
- III. Plantation woodlands and old existing hedge lines are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- IV. Settlement screening, where appropriate, is essential when considering all new development proposals

## (15) – Rolling Estate Farmlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns -

Harkstead, Holbrook, Long Melford (CA), Shotley, Shotley Gate (CA), Tattingstone, Wherstead, Woolverstone

## **Key Characteristics**

A valley side landscape of deep loams, with parklands plantations and Ancient woodlands. Across the district there are two distinct areas of this landscape type each with their own specific local characteristics.

### **Landscape Character (excluding Long Melford)**

- I. This landscape forms a narrow strip that runs along the south side of the Belstead Brook and along the coastal edge of the Shotley peninsula to Brantham on the Stour estuary, including the river valley around Holbrook. This landscape character of the Shotley peninsula is included within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as being adjacent to European designated sites.
- II. Woolverstone estate throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century significantly altered the features of the area by straightening boundaries and field amalgamations. This sloping valley landscape has been shaped by the parkland estates and Tudor and Jacobean houses overlooking the Orwell estuary. The estates and remnants of parkland features make a significant contribution to the character of this landscape.



Woolverstone Park

Joint Suffolk and Tendring District Council Landscape Guidance 2015



Facing inland from southern side of the Shotley Peninsula

- III. This rolling landscape, with ancient woodland blocks on the edges of the landscape, has an estate countryside appearance

### **Settlement Character (excluding Long Melford)**

- I. Historical industrial uses of the land included the extraction of London clay along the edge of the Shotley peninsula for brick-making. This included Brick-work sites in Holbrook, Shotley and Wherstead.
- II. Along the Shotley peninsula the spatial relationship of this landscape to the coastal landscape means that change and development here can have a profound visual impact.
- III. Shotley Gate contains a number of listed features and buildings of historical merit which provides an opportunity for developers to demonstrate the ability to understand the vernacular of the area by

sympathetically developing the site to enhance and elaborate on the distinctive character of the landscape. With views from both the Orwell and Stour estuary any development would be visually significant on the coastal setting.

- IV. The (C class) road between Shotley and Holbrook along the southern side is mainly single track with settlements and farmsteads of Erwarton, Harkstead and Lower Holbrook, and coastal views across the Stour estuary. There are a number of high hedges with partial shelter, however, the general feel along this stretch of the land is one of being very exposed to the elements
- V. Holbrook is a large village within this landscape and has accommodated mixed development extending along the northern end of Alton Water Reservoir. The village is set amongst mature hedges, trees, woodland and spinney.
- VI. Tattingstone has seen modern development on a smaller scale and encompasses small estate homes amongst mature hedges, trees and woodlands. .

#### **Landscape Character for Long Melford (located Western edge of Babergh District)**

- I. This landscape forms the valley side component to Ancient Rolling Farmlands in the Long Melford Area.
- II. The distinctive qualities of the estate landscape in Long Melford have been altered by the occasional straightening and realignment of a wider landscape of ancient enclosure.
- III. Pockets of woodland plantation and the registered historic parkland of Melford and Kentwell Hall are very significant features within this area.



Long Melford

#### **Settlement Character for Long Melford (located Western edge of Babergh District)**

- I. The ribbon pattern of settlement through the main street is characterised by the narrower road width at the southern end which opens out to an open green area on the eastern side and then the road widens out to provide generous spacing on both sides for car parking and trees. .
- II. The settlement pattern is more sporadic on the southern side with modern estates and the Maltings conversion. Long Melford has a unique development facing material of flint.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular the parkland within the settlement pattern within Long Melford.
- Enhance characteristics to the East of the district, of the estuarine environment.

### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas and the distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring.
- To safeguard the woodland plantations and Parkland areas.

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- II. Reinforce and recreate the estate and parkland features in new developments.
- III. Plantation woodlands and old existing hedges are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- IV. With views from both the Orwell and Stour estuary any development would be visually significant on the coastal setting. Ensure new development integrates with the settlement.

## (18) – Rolling Valley Farmlands

**Rolling Valley Farmlands**  
Gentle valley sides with some complex topography and occasional steep slopes. Underlying chalk geology with surface till forming well drained loam soils

Occasional landscape parks



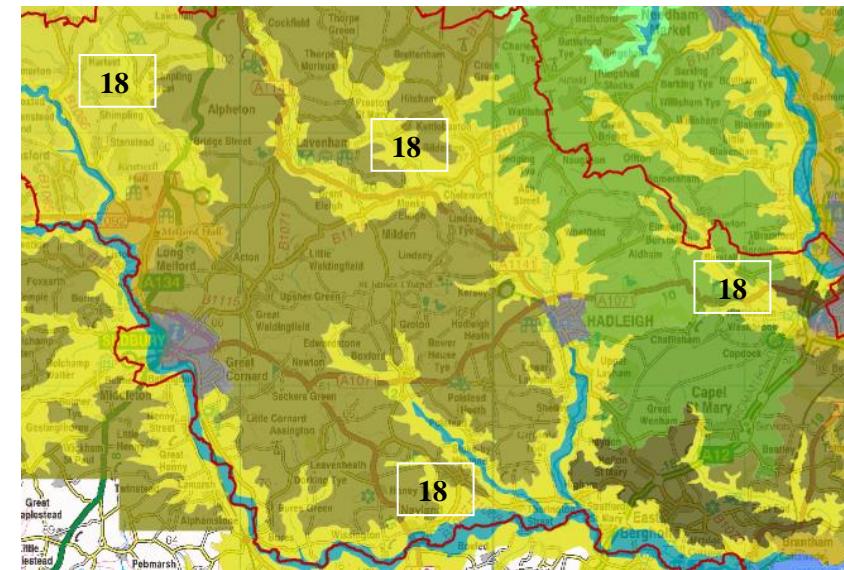
Organic field pattern especially on the lower slopes. On the higher ground increasingly regular field pattern and some amalgamation to form larger arable fields

Network of lanes and roads along valley landscape, many formed as sunken lanes

18

18

18



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns -

Belstead Brook, Bildeston (CA), Boxford (CA), Brantham, Brent Eleigh (CA), Bures St Mary (CA), Burstall (CA), Chelsworth (CA), East Bergholt (CA), Edwardstone, Hadleigh (CA), Higham (CA), Kersey (CA), Kettlebaston (CA), Lavenham (CA), Long Melford (CA), Upper Layham, Lower Layham, Monks Eleigh (CA), Nayland (CA), Polstead (CA), Shelley, Shimpling, Sproughton, Stanstead, Stoke by Nayland (CA), Stratford St Mary (CA), Sudbury (CA) and Thorington Street (CA)

## **Key Characteristics**

Valley sides with some complex and steep slopes in some places with deep well drained loamy soils and often sunken lanes - This type of valley is only found south of the River Gipping. This landscape makes a significant contribution to the specific local character of the district because it is the focus of historic settlement and wealth creation. It is found along the River Stour from the Cattawade and upstream (to Haverhill, across the district boundary) including tributary valleys of the Newmill Creek (to Little Wenham), the Brett (to Hitcham and Thorpe Morieux), the Brad (to Lavenham), the Box (to Edwardstone), the Chad Brook and the Glem. The Landscape character also includes the valley of lower Gipping from Sroughton upstream and includes the western tributary of Belstead Brook.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. The sloping valley sides with easily worked soils are ideal for farming and have been divided up into small and medium sized fields.
- II. Excavation of minerals is evident with disused chalk pits and lime kilns can be seen throughout this landscape.
- III. Ancient woodlands exist in small parcels on the upper slopes of the valleys. Two significant woods are the adjacent Lineage Wood and



Chelsworth



Lavenham

Spelthorn Wood in Long Melford.

IV. Brett Valley forms a considerable portion of this landscape character. With an open valley appearance there is a concentration of vegetation and unspoilt river meadows near the valley floor and open higher land, with occasional woodland areas contributing to the visual quality of this landscape.

V. At Great Cornard there is a parliamentary enclosure creating an area of a more regimented and systematic field pattern.

VI. A few areas are formed into Parkland; Tendring Hall Park at Stoke by Nayland, moderate sized parks at Polstead and Chelsworth in the Brett Valley and a small village green at Long Melford.

VII. From elevated locations within this landscape character substantial views are obtained. This area is considered to have a wide zone visual impact.

### **Settlement Character**

- I. Much of this landscape retains its historic field patterns, of both the agricultural and built environment and has been influenced by the river.
- II. There are a number of villages of distinctive character and a large portion of Conservation Areas, AONB and AONB project areas within this landscape.
- III. Isolated halls and churches provide significant architectural features within the landscape, in particular at Polstead on the River Box and at Little Wenham on the upper waters of the Newmill Creek.
- IV. With its' narrow streets, historic buildings, brick and flint walls and the square, Bildeston has retained a picturesque village atmosphere nestled within the valley as has the historic villages of Boxford and Kersey.



View of Long Melford Church

V. Brantham has experienced development throughout the twentieth century and contains a large area of historic industrial land which has been largely vacated. Brantham has been designated as an area for Strategic Development within the Core Strategy (Policy CS10). Located between two AONB's all future development should be considered with regard to the potential visual impact on both AONBs and the views from across the Stour Estuary.

VI. The southern part of East Bergholt lies within the boundary of the Dedham Vale AONB and has therefore has experienced a high degree of protection and enhancement. The linear settlements of East End and Gaston End create an expansive settlement pattern for East Bergholt and have, over time, become more like individual development clusters.

VII. The ribbon pattern of settlement through the main street of Long Melford is characterised by the narrower road width at the southern end

which opens out to an open green area on the eastern side and then the road widens out to provide generous spacing on both sides for car parking and trees. The settlement pattern is more sporadic on the southern side with modern estates and the Maltings conversion. Long Melford has a unique development facing material of flint.

- VIII. Small narrow winding lanes and roads that pass through the villages retain the rural character with only the occasional small hamlet or isolated farmstead to break up this gently rolling landscape. The
- IX. Historic villages blend with the valley landscape, with the buildings complementing a landscape of the highest visual quality. .
- X. Chelsworth village is distinctly set within a parkland location.

XI. Historic structures like Lavenham, Kersey and Long Melford Church are dominant features and important landmarks within the landscape.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the rolling valley landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

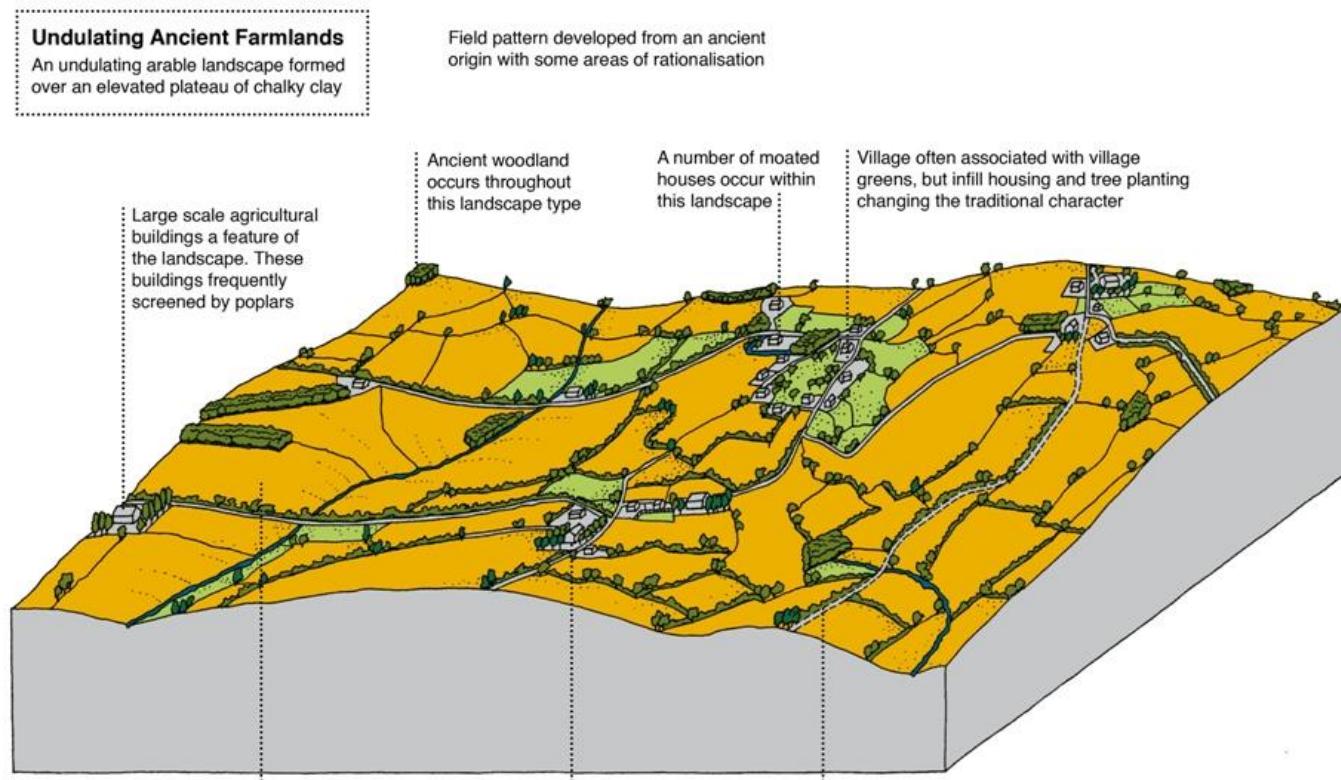
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape and settlement pattern.
- To safeguard the parkland areas, Village Greens and Tyes
- To safeguard and appropriately increase the woodland cover

### **Key Design Principles**

- 1 Due to the rolling landscape development in this area is considered to have a wide zone visual impact. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the potential visual impact on AONB and Conservation Areas
- 2 Reinforce the parkland and village green features in new developments.
- 3 Woodlands are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.

## (23) – Undulating Ancient Farmlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns –

Boxted, Glemsford (CA), Hartest (CA), Lawshall, Shimpling Street, Stanstead

## **Key Characteristics**

A landscape of open undulating farmland with blocks of ancient woodland - Landscape only occurs in one place; from Shimpling and Hartest in the east and then crossing the district boundary north as far as Chedburgh and west as far as Clare and Cowlinge.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. An area of clay “upland” is dissected by small valleys providing the character of an undulating landscape.
- II. Predominantly an area of “ancient enclosure”, with irregular field patterns, bounded by large, established hedges. The area has retained its historic character and development has been effectively managed. .
- III. Numerous areas of ancient woodland and hedgerows provide prominent features within the landscape setting.
- IV. The narrow winding lanes meander through this undulating landscape and through the gaps in the hedgerows glimpses of long open views of arable farmland with scattered ancient woodland and hedging.
- V. From elevated points the predominantly rural countryside character is evident with views between the valleys contrasting with the open fields systems on higher ground.
- VI. This undulating ancient farmland landscape with dispersed ancient woodland areas and the pattern of fields segmented by hedgerows and trees in various conditions provides the countryside with a quiet traditional farmland amenity.



Undulating landscape

## **Settlement Character**

- I. The setting of Hartest village compliments the landscape with high banked lanes cutting a path to the village centre that then open up to an area with houses framing small pockets of green open spaces with mature trees.
- II. The small narrow winding lanes and roads that pass through the villages of Boxted, Shimpling, Lawshall and Stanstead, retain the rural feel with only the occasional farmstead, hamlet and loosely clustered villages.
- III. Glemsford is the largest village set within this landscape character and is of mixed development. The northern end of the town is complimented by a green open space area framed by development. All the lanes leading into Glemsford consist of mature hedges and trees which softens the edges of the village. Although Glemsford is in an elevated location surrounded by agricultural fields the surrounding woodlands and nearby mature planting provides screening from the roads.



Isolated settlements set within the landscape



High banked lanes towards Hartest

### Aims

- To retain and enhance the landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the setting of the historic and cultural features with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

### Objectives

- To maintain and enhance the landscape and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- To reinforce and enhance the rural, quiet ambience of the area
- To safeguard the ancient woodland and hedges

### Key Design Principles

- I. Ancient woodlands and old existing hedges are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.

- II. Reinforce the village green open space features in new developments.
- III. To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for landscaping.
- IV. Settlement screening, where appropriate, is essential when considering all new development proposals

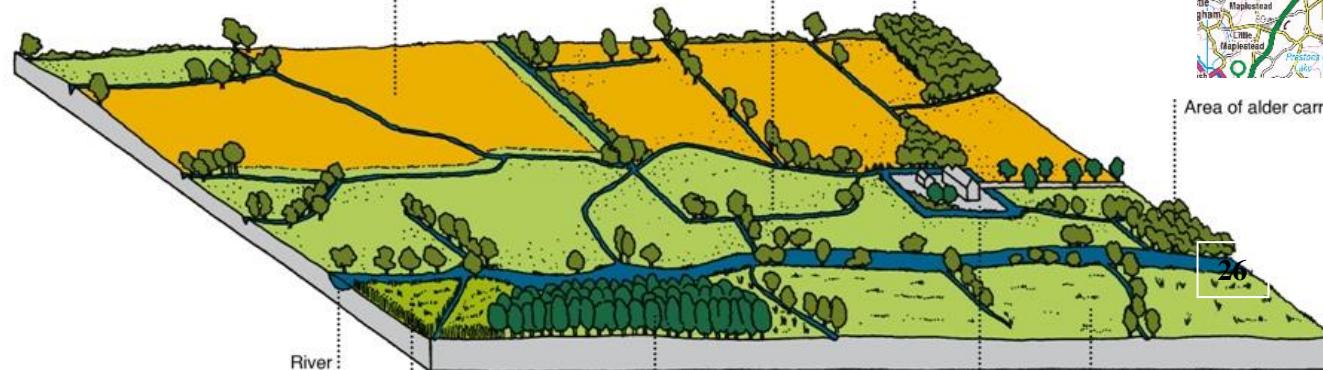
## (26) – Valley Meadowlands

**Valley Meadowlands**  
Flat landscape of alluvium and peat soils on the valley floors

On drier land or where 20th century drainage has been successful, the valley meadows have been converted to arable land. Other uses such as horse grazing is also starting to occur

Grassland divided by a network of wet ditches often lined with trees or scrubby hedges. Cattle grazed fields with some grassland reverted from 20th century arable land under agri-environment schemes

Areas of older alder carr remain in the valleys

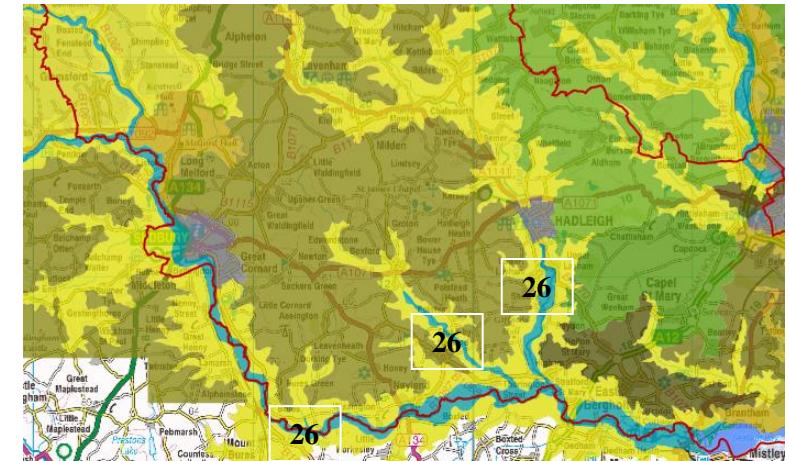


In the wettest areas there are occasional small areas of reedbed

Increasing use is made of former meadows for poplar or cricket bat willow plantations

Landscape is generally unsettled but there are occasional farmsteads on the edge of higher ground. Some significant medieval and Tudor moated sites also within the Valley Meadowlands

Meadows now mostly used for grazing livestock. A range of improved, semi-improved and unimproved grassland remains on the valley floors



Area of alder carr

26

Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns -

Branham, Bures St Mary (CA), Harkstead, Long Melford (CA), Nayland (CA), Shelley and Stratford St Mary (CA)

## **Key Characteristics**

In Babergh this landscape type makes up the valley floor of the Rolling Valley Farmlands (18), it is the only valley floor landscape type found within the District. This consistent combination of the Rolling Valley farmlands and Valley Meadowlands is characteristic of south Suffolk river valleys and contributes significantly to the distinctive character of the district.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. Flat river valley floor landscape banks along The River Stour, The River Box and The River Brett.
- II. The pattern of meadows divided by ditches and dykes are a characteristic feature of the landscape.
- III. Few woodlands exist in this land character however there are alder carrs and plantations
- IV. Some of these landscapes are in excellent condition and are excellent examples of pristine and picturesque meadows in a wider farmed landscape. Some meadows like the Sudbury common lands can provide an oasis of enclosure and confined views



Grazing and cricket bat willows on the valley floor at Sudbury



Long Melford Flood Meadow

V. The sense of tranquillity of this landscape however, can also be impacted upon by the development of the adjacent rolling valley landscapes (18), which are often a focus for settlement and development.

VI. This landscape character provides a valuable service as floodplains with the changing seasons provides the countryside with an ever changing landscape pattern.

VII. This landscape also provides a valuable ecological environment.

## **Settlement Character**

- I. Occasional farmsteads can be found on the edge of the valley.
- II. There are some significant medieval and Tudor moated sites: Parsonage Farm in Long Melford, Boxted hall, Smallbridge Hall in Bures St Mary and Shelley Hall.
- III. This landscape character around Harkstead and Branham is in close proximity to the estuary and consists of coastal views across the Stour estuary. The general amenity along this stretch of the land is one of being very exposed to the elements.
- IV. The landscape meanders around the edges of and through the surrounding village providing natural patterns for development.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the valley meadowlands landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- To safeguard the historic features such as moated sites
- To reinforce and enhance meadows and retain the existing field boundaries
- To safeguard the plantation areas
- To protect and enhance the ecological environment
- To safeguard the floodplains
- To safeguard the tranquillity of the area

## **Key Design Principles**

- I. Any development that impacts upon the historic moated sites will be accompanied by a management plan or other detailed evidence to support the proposals.
- II. Any changes or developments will have a significant effect on the landscape therefore all proposals should provide mitigation strategies to minimise the detrimental impact on both the visual amenity and the landscape character of the valley floor
- III. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the impact on floodplains and the ecological environment.
- IV. Retains the scenic and tranquil quality of the Valley Meadowlands Landscape



# **Mid Suffolk**

# **Landscape**

# **Character Areas**

## The Landscape Character of Mid Suffolk– An Overview

The landscape of the District is distinct from other parts of the County particularly because of its landform and river system, woodland cover and historic development. Much of the county north of the River Gipping is a gently rolling plateau of heavy clay soils. This area is drained by small tributaries or the headwaters of larger rivers so are much less dissected than the landscape south of the Gipping. Therefore the clay soils are naturally and historically poorly draining in this flat or gently rolling landscape. This has meant that the north Suffolk claylands were not suitable for early arable agriculture, so land was dominated by pasture and woodland often held in common. As this early extensive woodland was held in common grazing led to the creation of large open greens and woodland was only retained on the better draining fringes of the clay plateau where arable cultivation could be established earlier.

These difficulties meant that by the 18<sup>th</sup> century the majority of north Suffolk was dominated by, and renowned for, dairy farming. As a result the agricultural economy was significantly different to, and less prosperous than, that of south Suffolk. This only began to change in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century with the introduction of improved drainage techniques which open the land up to greater arable production and an initial wave of hedgerow removal to create bigger larger fields. However, the agricultural sector did support a range of other industries, with both the Waveney and the Gipping being developed as navigations.

It appears that this local distinctiveness has deep roots the ‘Gipping divide’<sup>2</sup> has also been recently recognised as being a significant historic cultural boundary. The areas on either side differ in the proportion of land formerly held in common fields, in the way their vernacular buildings were constructed and laid out, in their terminology for common pasture and woods and in their inheritance customs. The patterns seen in north Suffolk extend into Norfolk, and those in south Suffolk extend into Essex indicating that this was a boundary of regional importance that has a greater cultural significance than the existing county boundaries.

The Waveney and Gipping valleys are locally distinctive within the district, along the former there are a series of very light land areas/heathlands. Whilst along the Gipping valley the chalky soil offered better opportunities for arable farming, the creation of landscape parklands on the poorest land, and mineral extraction. This, along with the proximity to and good connection with Ipswich, via the river, fostered economic development of this area in the 19<sup>th</sup>C.

<sup>2</sup>For more detail, see: E. Martin & M. Satchell, *Wheare most Inclosures be*. East Anglian Fields: History, Morphology and Management, East Anglian Archaeology 124, 2008).

## **Landscape Characters for areas within the Mid Suffolk District**

The Landscape Guidance has used the Landscape Character Assessment areas as defined by Suffolk County Council and then included information and detail to ensure each Landscape character is clearly relating to the Mid Suffolk District.

### **01) Ancient Estate Claylands**

Ashbocking, Barham, Barham Green, Coddenham (CA), Coddenham Green, Creeting Bottoms, Crowfield, Gosbeck, Hemingstone, Helmingham, Henley, Pettaugh, Stonham Aspal, Winston, Winston Green.

### **03) Ancient Plateau Claylands**

Badwell Ash, Barking, Barking Tye, Battisford Tye, Broad Green, Burgate, Charles Tye, Combs, Creeting St Peter, Elmswell, Eye (CA), Forward Green, Gipping, Great Ashfield, Haughley (CA), Haughley Green, Hinderclay, Hunston (CA), Langham, Little Finborough, Mellis (CA), Nettlestead, Norton, Old Newton, Palgrave (CA), Redgrave (CA), Ringshall, Stowlangtoft, Stowmarket (CA), Stowupland, Thorney Green, Thornham Parva, Walsham-le-Willows (CA), Wattisfield (CA), Willisham, Wortham, Yaxley.

### **04) Ancient Rolling Farmlands**

Akenham, Beyton (CA), Drinkstone Green, Felsham (CA), Harleston, Hessett, Onehouse, Shelland, Thurston, Tostock (CA), Woolpit (CA)

### **10) Plateau Claylands**

Ashfield-cum-Thorpe, Athelington, Bacton, Bacton Green, Bedfield, Bedingfield, Brockford, Brundish, Cotton, Cratfield, Denham, Earls Green, Finningham (CA), Fressingfield (CA), Gislingham, Great Ashfield, Horham, Kenton, Laxfield (CA), Little Stonham, Long Thurlow, Mendlesham (CA), Mendlesham Green, Metfield (CA), Mickfield, Middlewood Green, Monk Soham, Occold, Redlingfield, Rishangles, Saxham Street, Southolt, Stonham Parva, Stradbroke (CA), Syleham, Tannington, Thorndon, Westhorpe, Wetherup Street, Wetheringsett (CA), Weybread, Wilby, Wingfield (CA), Worlingworth, Wyverstone

### **15) Rolling Estate Farmlands**

Akenham, Claydon, Coddenham (CA)

### **17) Rolling Valley Claylands**

Aspall, Badley (CA), Badley Green, Battisford, Brockford Street, Brome, Buxhall, Combs, Eye (CA), Debenham (CA), Framsden, Gedding, Great Finborough, Hoxne (CA), Laxfield (CA), Rattlesden (CA), Ringshall, Stoke Ash, Thornham Magna, Thorndon, Thwaite, Wickham Skeith (CA), Yaxley,

### **18) Rolling Valley Farmlands**

Bayham, Bramford, Darmsden, Little Blakenham, Great Blakenham, Great Bricett, Offton, Somersham

### **19) Rolling Valley Farmlands & Furze**

Botesdale (CA), Creeting St Mary, Drinkstone, Earl Stonham, Oakley, Old Newton, Rickinghall (CA), Stowmarket, Stuston, Thelnetham, Thrandeston (CA), Wattisfield (CA), Woolpit (CA), Woolpit Heath

**26) Valley Meadowlands**

Needham Market (CA)

**27) Valley Meadowlands and Fens**

No Settlements

**30) Wooded Valley Meadowlands**

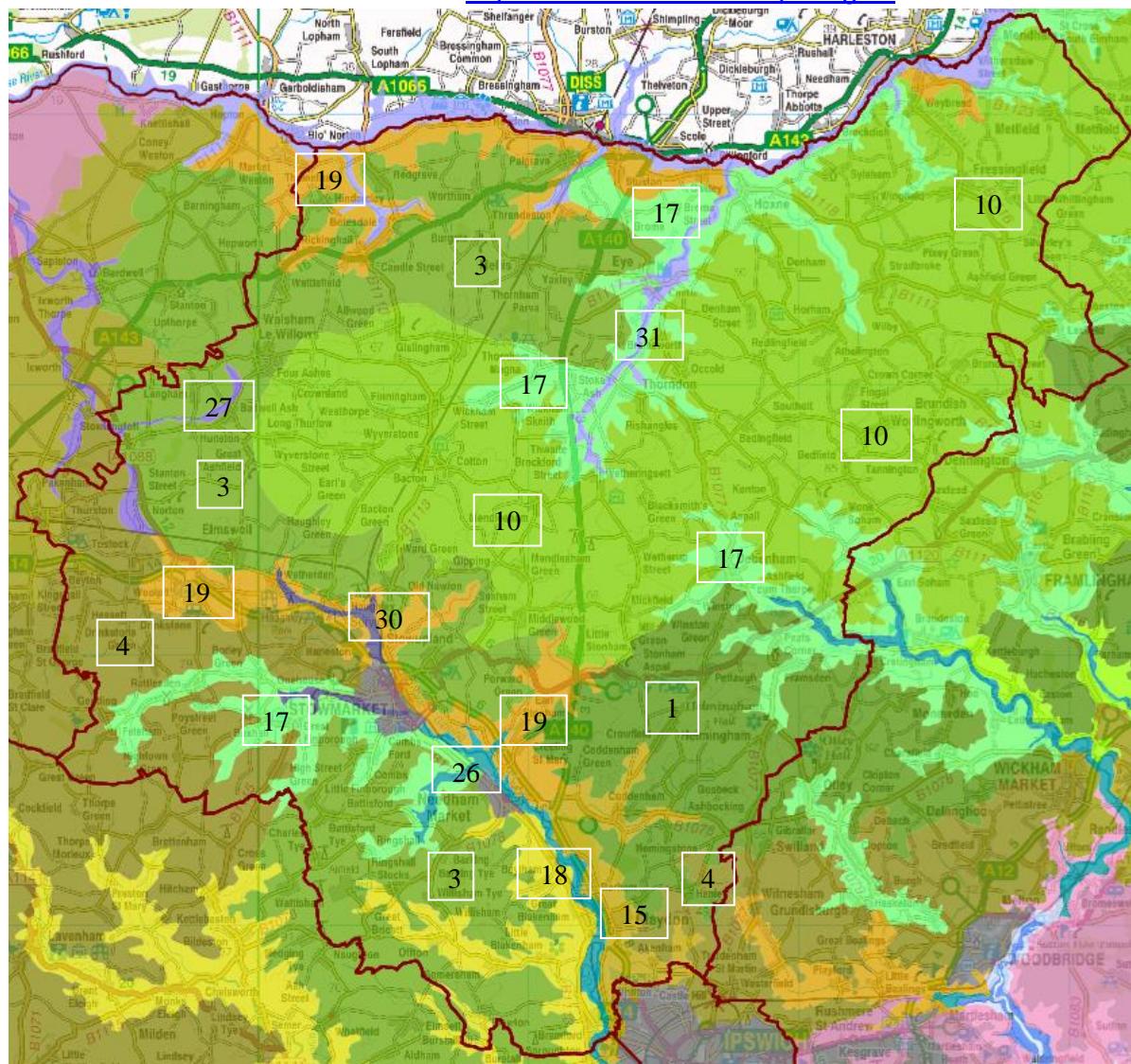
Dagworth, Haughley New Street, Wetherden

**31) Wooded Valley Meadowlands and Fens**

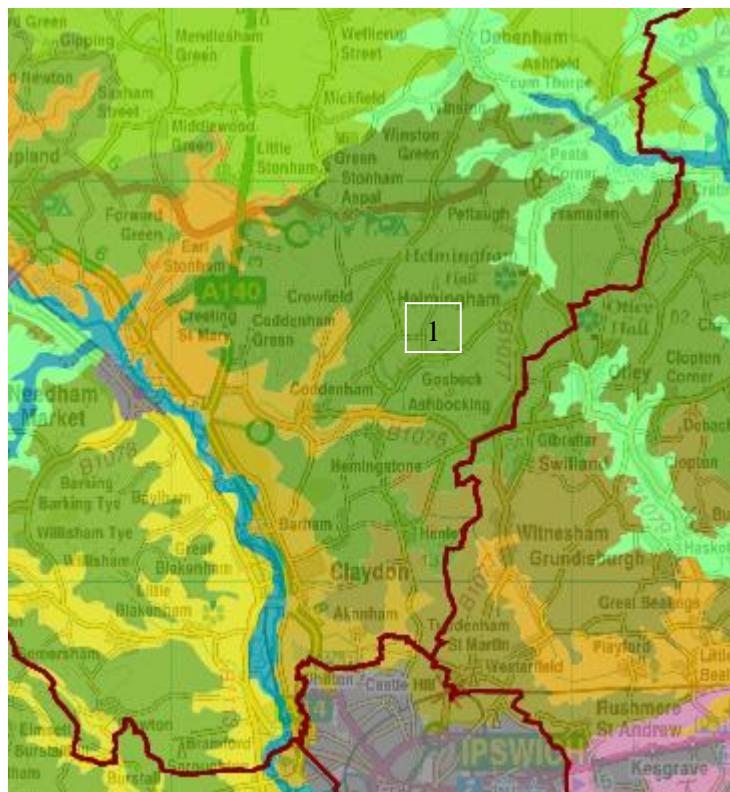
Eye (CA), Mendham, Rickinghall (CA), Wetheringsett (CA)

## Map of Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment

Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>



## (1) – Ancient Estate Claylands



**Ancient Estate Claylands**  
Dissected Boulder Clay landform

On the flatter areas there is evidence of World War II airfields. Some of the former military buildings have now been converted into industrial use

Blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland scattered across the area

Hedgerow trees associated with ancient enclosure

Organic pattern of field enclosure retained over large areas

Enclosed former greens

Dispersed settlement pattern

Winding lanes

Around Estate landscapes the field boundaries are more tightly controlled with fewer hedgerow trees and straighter boundaries

Area contains a number of landscaped parklands with associated trees and shelterbelt planting

Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns –

Ashbocking, Barham, Barham Green, Coddenham, Coddenham Green, Creeting Bottoms, Crowfield, Gosbeck, Hemingstone, Helmingham, Henley, Pettaugh, Stonham Aspal, Winston, Winston Green.

## **Key Characteristics**

Gently rolling heavy clay plateaux with ancient woodlands and parklands - This landscape type occurs on the eastern side of the Suffolk claylands and is formed from glacial till and boulder clay left behind by the great Anglian Glaciations. In Mid Suffolk District it is found to east of Needham Market

## **Landscape Character**

- I. Fields are medium to large, and hedges vary from large with a mix of trees and shrubs to single species hedges.
- II. Blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland are scattered throughout the area, made up of oak, ash, field maple, hornbeam and small leaved lime. In particular there is Gosbeck Woods.
- III. Small streams and rivers give an important variation to these landscapes dissecting each individual plateau.
- IV. Some of the flatter landscapes were used for large common pastures such as Barham and Crowfield Green. Other areas like Helmingham Park were used for deer parks and later parks occurred such as at Coddenham. These flatter open landscapes all provide a significant local visual impact.
- V. The majority of this landscape character is visually open and expansive; however, there are areas of tall hedges and winding lanes which provide a more quiet and enclosed amenity.

## **Settlement Character**

- I. Settlement pattern is scattered consisting of various sized small villages, dispersed hamlets and isolated farmsteads.
- II. The quiet single track lanes and small roads wind their way through this landscape character with many of the settlements formed within a ribbon development interspersed between views of open fields seen through the sporadic hedgerows of various heights, sizes and maturity.



III. With a mix of old and new developments surrounded by mature hedges and agricultural fields, the villages are nestled within the landscape without overly intruding on the countryside surrounding them.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the clayland landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the settlement pattern

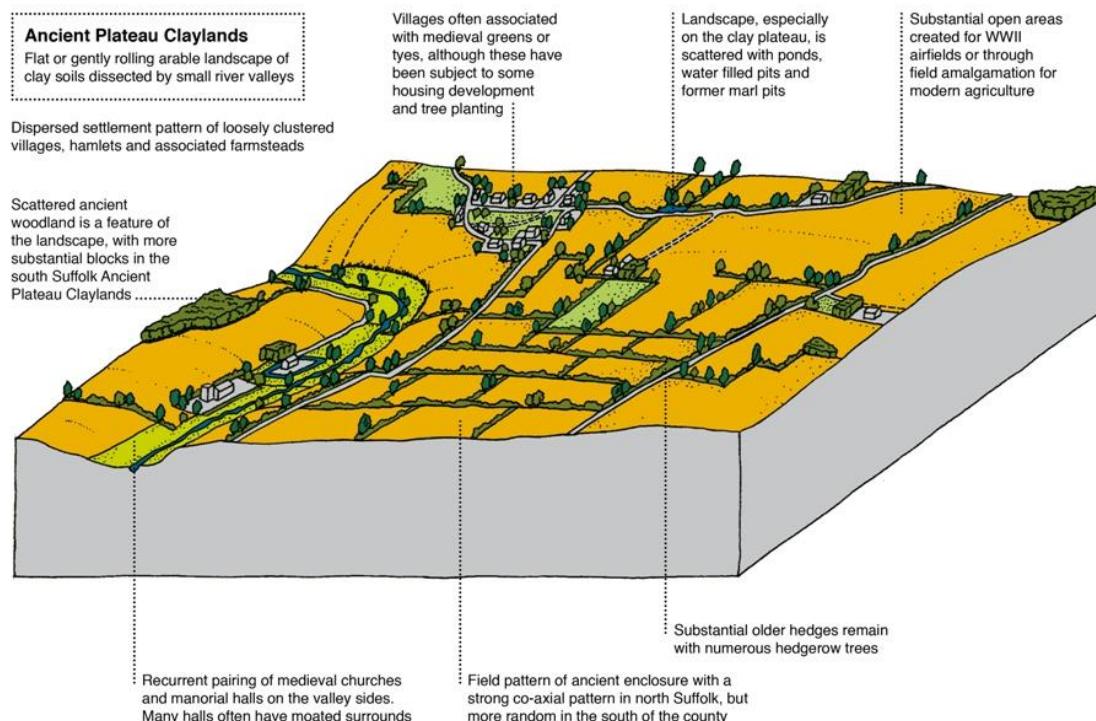
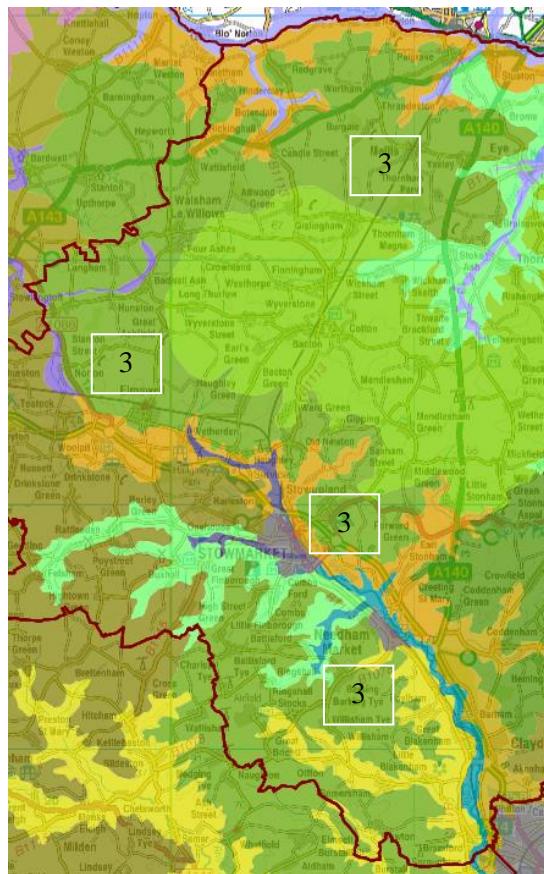
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape area and distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained where appropriate.
- To safeguard the ancient woodlands, hedges and parklands.
- To safeguard the rural lanes and traditional landscape.

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Maintain the integrity of the individual distinctive settlement patterns, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- II. Ancient woodlands, Parklands and old existing hedge lines are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.

### (3) – Ancient Plateau Claylands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

#### Villages and towns –

Badwell Ash, Barking , Barking Tye, Battisford Tye, Broad Green, Burgate, Charles Tye, Combs, Creeting St Peter, Elmswell, Eye, Forward Green, Gipping, Great Ashfield, Haughley (CA), Haughley Green, Hinderclay, Hunston (CA), Langham, Little Finborough, Mellis (CA), Nettlestead, Norton, Old Newton, Palgrave (CA), Redgrave (CA), Ringshall, Stowlangtoft, Stowmarket, Stowupland, Thorney Green, Thornham Parva, Walsham-le-Willows, Wattisfield (CA), Willisham, Wortham, Yaxley.

## **Key Characteristics**

Gently rolling heavy clay plateaux with ancient woodlands - This landscape character occurs south of the Gipping Valley from Combs southward to Wattisham, Barking, and Nettlestead and across the district boundary into Babergh. North side of the Gipping Valley the character sweeps up in an arc on the north-east edge of the central clay plateau and westwards from Creeting St Peter and Stowupland through to Haughley, Elmswell, Walsham-le- Willows, crossing the district boundary into St. Edmundsbury and then eastward to Wattisfield, Wortham, Mellis, Burgate and the western side of Eye in the Dove Valley.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. The top of the plateau is generally flat or only gently undulating, with attractive small valleys. Towards the edges it is more dissected with greater more complex slopes.
- II. Land cover is predominantly arable farmland retaining much of the older field patterns of irregular partitions along with numerous areas of pasture land with substantial blocks of woodland and established hedgerows.
- III. Some areas have experienced large losses of hedgerow due to changing agricultural practices resulting in the creation of open arable "prairie" landscapes.
- IV. The ancient and plantation woodlands that cover this landscape character consist of; Combs Wood, Bonny Wood in Barking, Westhall Wood near Rickinghall and Burgate Wood.
- V. Many areas of poor draining clay plateaux are covered with former greens and commons which range in size from small triangular greens at junctions such as at Cross Green in Old Newton to two of the largest surviving greens in Suffolk of Mellis Green and Wortham Long Green. Other areas are recognised as greens by their names; Battisford Tye, Barking Tye, Charles Tye and Willisham Tye. These surviving Greens and Tyes contribute significantly to local character.
- VI. There are only occasional landscape parks within this Landscape type such as at Thornham Magna and Stowlangtoft.
- VII. Unlike the Plateau Clayland landscape blocks of ancient woodland are visibly present in the landscape.
- VIII. Airfields are a recurring feature and within this landscape character, in Mid Suffolk; there is Eye Airfield which has a significant visual impact due to the level topography in this area.



Mellis Common- one of the largest surviving greens in Suffolk.

## **Settlement Character**

- I. Scattered settlement pattern ranging from farmsteads, clustered development of various sizes to the elongation (ribbon development) of larger groups.



View towards Burgate.

II. The narrow roads through this landscape character travels through open countryside framed by hedgerows and areas of woodland and with pockets of farmsteads set well back from the road and isolated villages with a ribbon settlement pattern sporadically located. Providing a quiet and rural atmosphere.

III. Soft landscaping has ensured existing settlements are well screened and do not have a negative visual impact of this flat landscape character

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the woodland, parkland and prairie landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

### **Objectives**

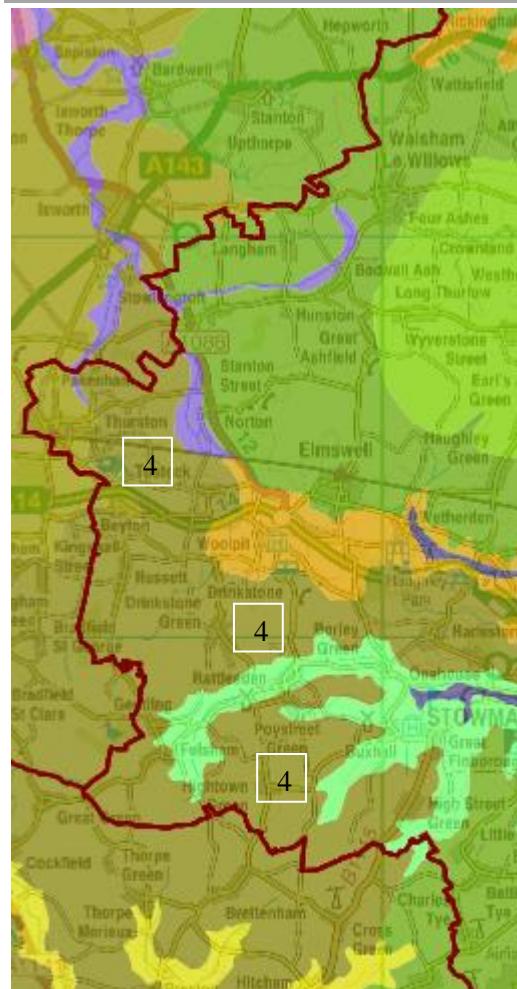
- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas and settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained where appropriate.
- To reinforce and enhance the existing field boundaries
- To safeguard the plantation and ancient woodland areas
- Safeguard the parkland areas

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. This is quite open landscape with the potential of any form of development to be visibility intrusive if it has been designed without sufficient screening or an appropriate landscape design plan
- II. Reinforce and enhance parkland features in new developments where appropriate.

- III. Ancient woodlands and old existing hedge lines are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- IV. To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for landscaping.

## (4) – Ancient Rolling Farmlands



### Ancient Rolling Farmlands

Rolling arable landscape of chalky clays and loams. Claylands dissected, sometimes deeply, by river valleys

Scattered parcels of ancient woodland

Substantial open areas have been created for WWII airfields and as part of modern agricultural expansion

Villages often historically associated with greens or tyes, but many now developed or converted to intensive agriculture

Network of winding lanes and paths associated with hedges

Fields have ancient origins and create a random pattern across the landscape

Hedges and hedgerow trees are prominent features where field amalgamation has not taken place



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns -

Akenham, Beyton (CA), Drinkstone Green, Felsham (CA), Harleston, Hessett, Onehouse, Shelland, Thurston, Tostock (CA),

## **Key Characteristics**

A rolling landscape of medium clay soils studded with blocks of ancient woodland – Encompasses a couple of small areas within the Mid Suffolk District; north of Ipswich covering an area from Akenham and Claydon up to Henley and across the district boundary into Suffolk Coastal and also west of Stowmarket and across the district boundary into Babergh and St Edmundsbury.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. The rolling clayland landscape is dissected by river valleys including the Rattlesden River (a tributary of the Gipping River) and tributaries of the River Brett.
- II. Ancient and species-rich hedgerows (mainly oak, ash and field maple, with suckering elm) and associated ditches have a strong visual impact as they are frequently high and wide.
- III. Ancient woodland such as Northfield Wood in Onehouse and Woolpit Wood are scattered throughout in blocks consisting largely of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash, holly and elm. The woodlands provide strong visual features within the landscape.
- IV. Although there are some extensive field amalgamations resulting in a much more open landscape, overall the landscape is largely intact due to the number of valleys that dissect this landscape character, which has reduced the scope for field amalgamation and boundary loss compared to other parts of the district.
- V. A dense network of winding roads and wide verges weaves a pathway through this landscape character.
- VI. At Rattlesden there is an area of flat interfluvium (area between valleys that is adjacent to a watercourse) which was used for a military airfield in World War II.
- VII. The current crop production of cereals and oilseed rape and increasing equine use has a significant visual impact on the landscape. Wide panoramic views are offered in all directions of the compass from this landscape character.

## **Settlement Character**

- I. The settlement pattern mainly consists of dispersed farmsteads of mediaeval origin with some larger hamlets and small villages that complement the rural land form and landscape.
- II. There are frequent occurrences of small to moderate sized greens. Some have been enclosed and even lost through infill development over the years, however, the remaining open spaces such as Beyton and Tostock Green are very important as they shape the relationship of buildings to each other and define the form of settlements.
- III. The small narrow winding lanes and roads that pass through the villages of this landscape character retain the tranquil, rural feel with only the occasional small hamlet or isolated farmstead to break up this gently rolling landscape.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular safeguarding the influences of the area.

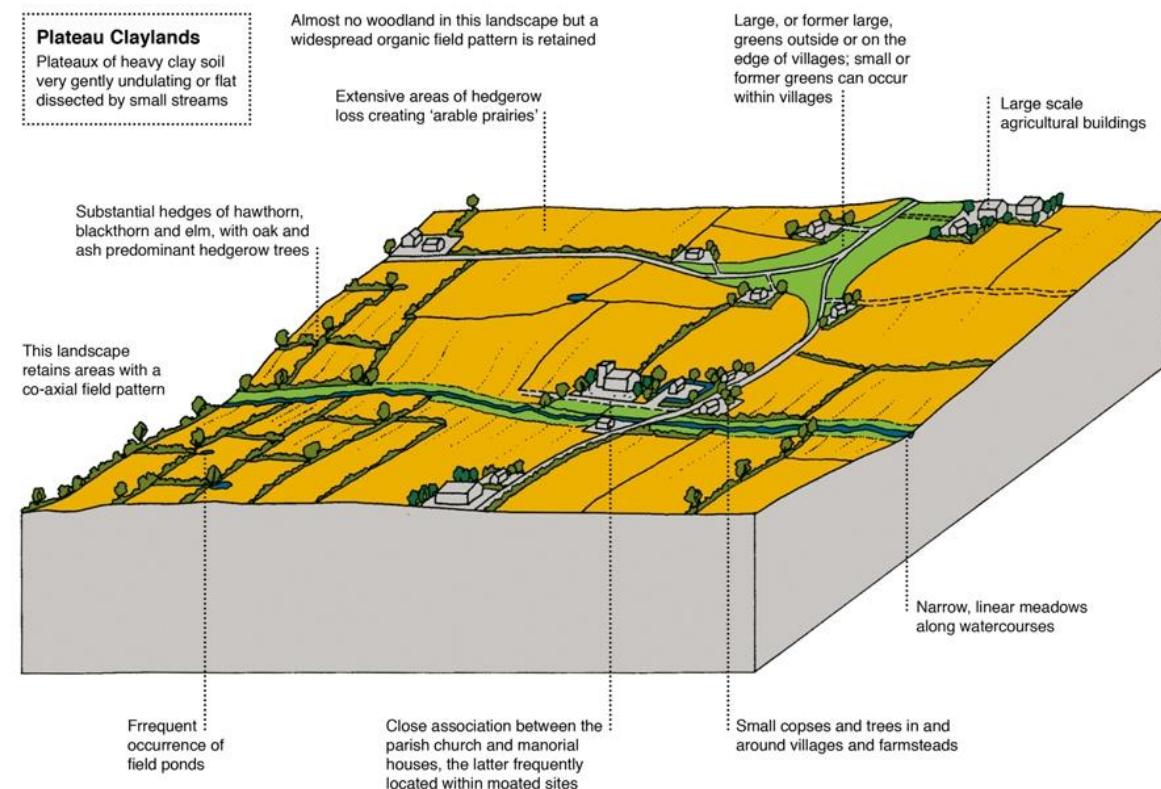
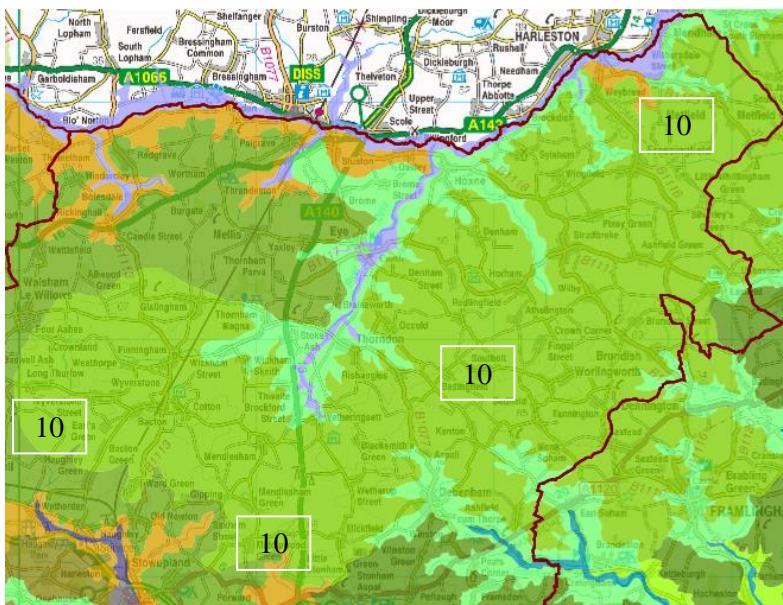
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- To reinforce hedgerows of locally native species and retain the existing field boundaries.
- To safeguard the ancient hedgerow and woodland areas
- To safeguard the green open space areas

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. There are significant sized areas of open landscape providing wide panoramic views, with the potential of any form of development to be visibility intrusive if it has been designed without sufficient screening, appropriate landscape design plan or appropriate siting.
- II. Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- III. Retain rural character of the small settlements and conservation areas by avoiding the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials and features.
- IV. Consider cumulative visual impact of equine development and ancillary equipment within this landscape character.
- V. Restore, maintain and enhance green and woodland areas.
- VI. Hedging for boundaries will be designed to reflect the local planting scheme to reduce visual impact on the distinctive character of the area.
- VII. To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for on and off site landscaping including enhancing field boundaries with local hedging and tree species.

## (10) – Plateau Claylands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns -

Ashfield-cum-Thorpe, Athelington, Bacton, Bacton Green, Bedfield, Bedingfield, Brockford, Brundish, Cotton, Cratfield, Denham, Earls Green, Finningham (CA), Fressingfield (CA), Gislingham, Great Ashfield, Horham, Kenton, Laxfield (CA), Little Stonham, Long Thurlow, Mendlesham (CA), Mendlesham Green, Metfield (CA), Mickfield, Middlewood Green, Monk Soham, Occold, Redlingfield, Rishangles, Saxham Street, Southolt, Stonham

Parva, Stradbroke (CA), Syleham, Tannington, Thorndon, Westhorpe, Wetherup Street, Wetheringsett (CA), Weybread, Whilby, Wingfield (CA), Worlingworth, Wyverstone

### **Key Characteristics**

A gently rolling heavy clay plateau with sparse woodland cover and some extensive areas of post WWII field boundary loss - This landscape character covers a large area in central north Suffolk from Great Ashfield and Walsham-le-Willows across the district border into Suffolk Coastal and extending down to the edge of the Gipping valley. This landscape type covers the majority of the district and is the core landscape of the High Suffolk and south Norfolk National Character Area.

### **Landscape Character**

- I. Poorly drained areas of the clay plateau are covered with numerous extant or former greens and commons. In particular Allwood Green which extended over parts of five parishes – Farningham, Gislingham, Rickinghall Inferior and Superior and Walsham-le –Willows. Although the loss of greens and commons was significant there are still a number of fine greens surviving, in particular Chippenhall Green in Fressingfield. The enclosure of the former greens has left a very distinct landscape with straight “surveyors” roads running through the centre of the former greens.
- II. Wet land of the plateau was often used for medieval deer parks, for example at Eye. Many of the parks were wooded or partly wooded so there is frequently close association with other areas of woodland and/or greens, for example Depperhaugh Wood and Reading Green beside the Hoxne park, Hestley Green and Rishangles Green at Thorndon and Park Street Green, Broad Green and Blacksmith’s Green at Thorndon.
- III. The landscape was also extensively used for World War II airfields, as at Great Ashfield, Mendlesham, Horham and Metfield.
- IV. Small areas of ancient woodland, around Denham, Hoxne and Redlingfield are all that exist within this landscape character and are associated with the valleys of Chickering Beck and the Gold Brook.
- V. Arable farming dominates this landscape with hedging providing a variable visual impact. Boundary trees (ash and oak in particular) are present in many of the hedges and Poplars have a significant visual impact in this landscape.
- VI. The overall appearance is of wide open views with small clusters of hedges, trees and houses.



North of Stonham Parva

## **Settlement Character**

- I. The scattered historic settlement pattern range from farmsteads, clustered development of various sizes to the elongation (ribbon development) of larger groups.



Gislingham

## **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the open space landscape with appropriate designing and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

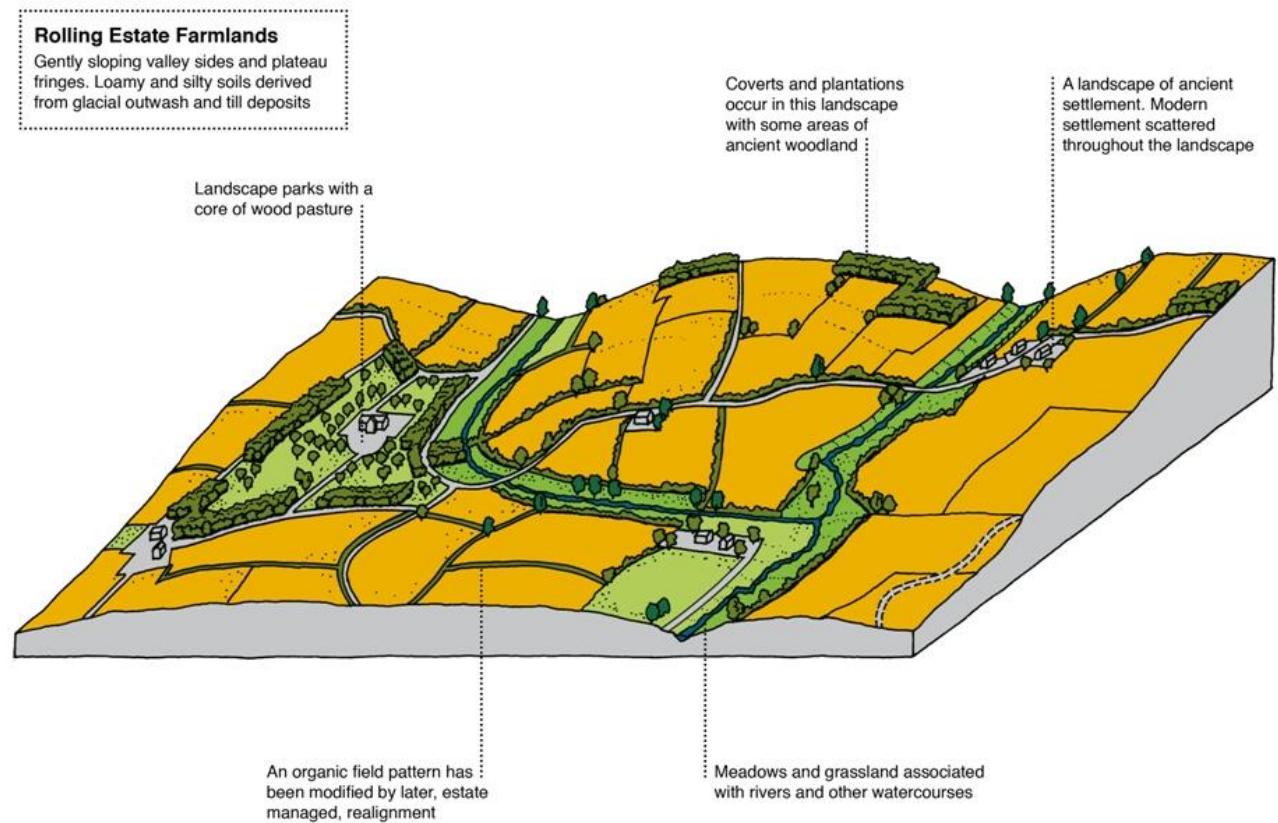
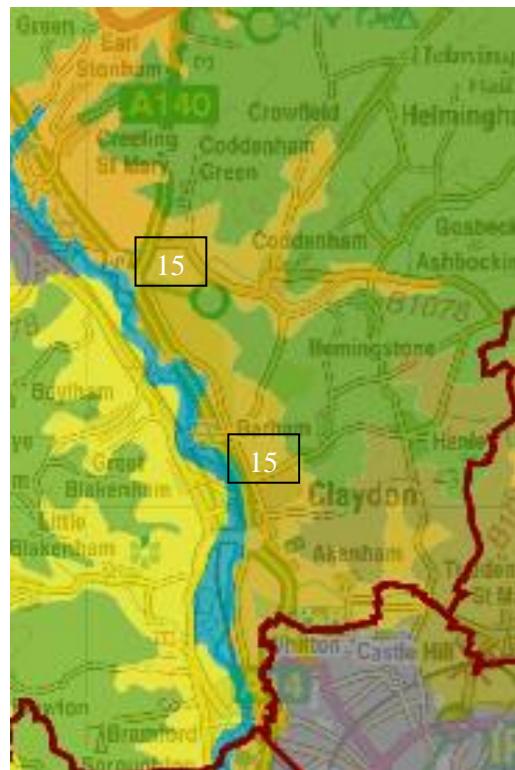
## **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- To reinforce hedgerows of locally native species and retain the existing field boundaries.
- To safeguard the ancient hedgerow, woodland areas and green open spaces

## **Key Design Principles**

- I. Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- II. Retain rural character of the small settlements and conservation areas by avoiding the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials and features.
- III. Restore, maintain and enhance green and woodland areas.
- IV. Hedging for boundaries will be designed to reflect the local planting scheme to reduce visual impact on the distinctive character of the area.
- V. To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for on and off site landscaping including enhancing field boundaries with local hedging and tree species.

## (15) – Rolling Estate Farmlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns -

Akenham, Claydon, Coddenham, Hemingstone

## **Key Characteristics**

A valley side landscape of chalky loams, with parkland, plantations and Ancient woodlands. This landscape consists of gently sloping valley sides and plateau fringes and is found on the east-side of the Gipping valley and from its tributaries from Sproughton upstream to Coddenham and Hemingstone (where it forms the valley component to Ancient Estate Claylands)

## **Landscape Character**

- I. Enclosure pattern can be complex with slopes dissected by short streams and consisting of small woodland plantations and parklands. The Grade I registered parkland around Coddenham is extremely significant.
- II. The sense of estate ownership over much of this rolling landscape, with ancient woodland blocks on the edges of the landscape and well maintained areas of hedges and trees is still very strong.



Hemingstone Church

## **Settlement Character**

- I. The valley-side locations of this landscape type, with their combination of access to water and arable potential not only attracted settlement from an early date but also industrial uses with the sand and gravel resources of the Gipping valley extensively exploited leaving a series of large lakes including Broomfield Pit workings in Barham. The outcrops of chalk on the valley sides were also exploited resulting in pits in Claydon and Coddenham.
- II. The Rolling Estate Farmlands support villages, hamlets and farmsteads and the spatial relationship of this landscape to the valley floor means that any change and or development would be visually significant.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character.

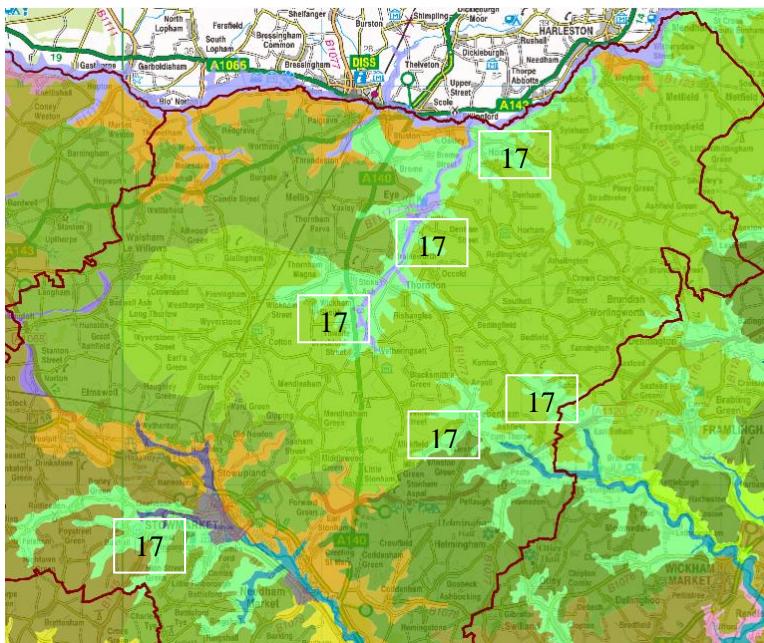
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas and the distinctive settlement pattern.
- To safeguard the woodland plantations and Parkland areas.
- To safeguard and enhance the estate features.

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- II. Reinforce and recreate the estate features in new developments.
- III. Plantation woodlands, parklands and old existing hedges are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.

## (17) – Rolling Valley Claylands



**Rolling Valley Claylands**  
Gentle valley sides with occasional steep slopes. Clay soils that are frequently workable for cultivation

Field sizes in the valley bottoms are generally smaller than on the surrounding slopes. There is also a transition from meadows and grassland to arable as the landscape rises up the valley slopes

Ancient woodland in the upper fringes of the valley sides



Landscape type is a focus for settlement. Moated houses are a notable feature as are isolated churches

Many fields bounded by substantial hedgerows often with oak and ash pollards

Fields are often smaller than on the surrounding plateau landscape

Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns -

Aspall, Badley (CA), Badley Green, Battisford, Brockford Street, Brome, Buxhall, Combs, Eye (CA), Debenham, Framsden, Gedding, Great Finborough, Hoxne (CA), Laxfield (CA), Rattlesden (CA), Ringshall, Stoke Ash, Thornham Magna, Thorndon, Thwaite, Wickham Skeith (CA), Yaxley,

## **Key Characteristics**

The Rolling Valley Clayland is found in the upper reaches of most of the east Suffolk rivers including: the Rattlesden River and other western tributaries of the Gipping, from Stowmarket upstream to Felsham, Little Finborough, Combs and Ringshall; the River Dove upstream from Wetheringsett to Eye and Hoxne, together with its tributaries the Gold Brook (from Denham) and the Chickering Beck (from Horham); the River Waveney from Hoxne eastward and out of the district and River Deben and its tributaries including one that stretches from Monk Soham and out across the district border.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. This Landscape is found on the sides of the valleys that cut through the central clay plateau of Suffolk. Whilst most slopes are generally moderate there are some places, in particular the tributaries of the Waveney at Fressingfield and Mendham where the slopes are very steep and unexpected within the East Anglian landscape.
- II. Field sizes are generally small and natural in character, with substantial and long-established hedges of hawthorn, blackthorn and dogwood.
- III. Although woodland cover is fragmented the small pockets of woodland have a considerable visual impact such as Combs Wood and Muckinger Wood near Ringshall.
- IV. The hedges are of a typical mix of clayland species, most prominently ash and oak and the established network of hedges have a significant visual impact within this landscape of valleys.
- V. The Rolling Valley claylands also have some areas of grassland, often in the form of slip meadows along the stream sides such as at Stoke Ash and Thornham at the head of the Dove. There are also landscape and deer parks and that fall partly into the landscape valleys at Helmingham and Eye.



Rolling Valley Claylands - Buxhall

## **Settlement Character**

- I. With the combination of closeness to water and better-drained and more easily cultivated soils, the river valley slopes have supported settlements from an early date and some have grown into substantial villages and market towns such as Debenham and Eye.
- II. With the exception of Thrandeston Great Green there are very few substantial greens or commons.
- III. New development within this landscape character is likely to have a significant impact on both the character and visual amenity of valley floor and valley side.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the rolling valley clayland landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

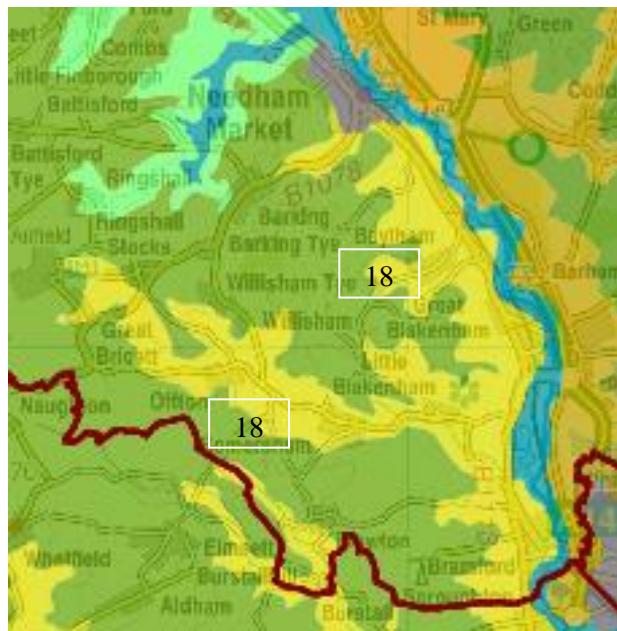
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape and settlement pattern.
- To safeguard the meadow and parkland areas and village greens
- To safeguard and increase the woodland and hedge cover

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Due to the rolling landscape development in this area is considered to have a significant visual impact. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the potential visual impact on Conservation Areas.
- II. Reinforce the parkland and village green features in new developments.
- III. Woodlands are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.

## (18) – Rolling Valley Farmlands



**Rolling Valley Farmlands**  
Gentle valley sides with some complex topography and occasional steep slopes. Underlying chalk geology with surface till forming well drained loam soils

Occasional landscape parks

Organic field pattern especially on the lower slopes. On the higher ground increasingly regular field pattern and some amalgamation to form larger arable fields

Network of lanes and roads along valley landscape, many formed as sunken lanes



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns -

Bayham, Bramford, Darmsden, Little Blakenham, Great Blakenham, Great Bricett, Offton, Somersham

## **Key Characteristics**

This landscape character occurs along the valley of lower Gipping from Sroughton upstream to the southern edge of Needham market, and those of its western tributaries including The Channel to Great Bricett.

### **Landscape Character**

- I. The sloping valley sides with easily worked soils are ideal for farming and have been divided up into small and medium sized fields.
- II. Excavation of minerals is evident with disused chalk pits and lime kilns can be seen throughout this landscape such as at Little Blakenham, Great Blakenham, Baylham and Barking.
- III. The good arable soil was exploited for farming although the creation of parkland did take place formerly at Bramford in the Gipping valley.
- IV. Due to the quality of the arable soil only a very few common pasture areas exist within this landscape character. Some former common arable land is known by name only such as Baylham Common.
- V. Ancient woodlands exist in small parcels on the upper slopes of the valleys. One significant wood is Middle Wood in Offton.
- VI. Brett Valley only sits within a small section of Mid Suffolk; however, it forms a considerable portion of this landscape character. With an open valley appearance there is a concentration of vegetation and unspoilt river meadows near the valley floor and open higher land, with occasional woodland areas contributing to the visual quality of this landscape.
- VII. From elevated locations within this landscape character substantial views are obtained. This area is considered to have a wide zone visual impact.



Swingens Wood near Barking

### **Settlement Character**

- I. Much of the growth and development of villages in this landscape and retention of its historic field patterns, of both the agricultural and built environment has been influenced by the river and quality of the agricultural soil. The areas also benefits from the steepest and fastest flowing rivers in the county.
- II. Isolated halls and churches provide significant architectural features within the landscape.
- III. Small narrow winding lanes and roads that pass through the villages retain the rural character with only the occasional small hamlet or isolated farmstead to break up this gently rolling landscape.
- IV. Historic villages blend with the valley landscape, with the buildings complementing a landscape of the highest visual quality.

V. Historic structures like churches are dominant features and important landmarks within the landscape.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the rolling valley landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

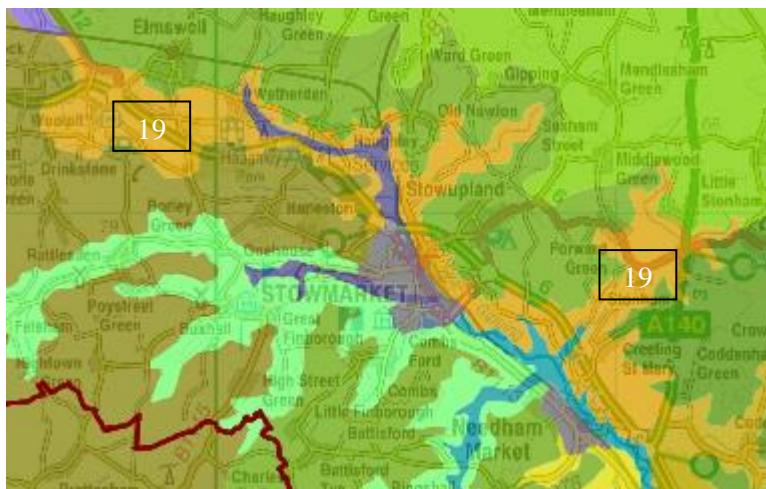
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape and settlement pattern.
- To safeguard any parkland and commons features.
- To safeguard and increase the woodland cover

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Due to the rolling landscape development in this area is considered to have a wide zone visual impact. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the potential visual impact on Conservation Areas
- II. Enhance the parkland and commons features in new developments.
- III. Woodlands are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.

## (19) – Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze



**Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze**  
Valleys with prominent river terraces. In the major valleys terraces form narrow bands with the sloping valley sides rising from the rivers. Outwash deposits of silts, sands and gravels

Golf course development is also a feature of this landscape type

River terraces and valley sides a focus for settlement. Villages tend to be clustered with farmsteads lower down the valley sides

Elements of co-axial field systems remain

Fragmentary woodland cover on the valley sides but trees on the valley floors

Landscape has been subject to sand and gravel extraction leaving numerous water filled pits and associated rough grassland

River valleys with terraces associated with grazed grassland

Small areas of gorse heathland

Arable cultivation increasingly dominates

Straight field boundaries associated with late enclosure

Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns –

Botesdale (CA), Creeting St Mary, Drinkstone, Earl Stonham, Oakley, Old Newton, Rickinghall (CA), Stowmarket, Stuston, Thelnetham, Thrandeston (CA), Wattisfield (CA), Woolpit (CA), Woolpit Heath

## **Key Characteristics**

This landscape character occurs in the upper Gipping valley from Woolpit eastward to Stowmarket and in its eastern tributaries from Mendlesham area south-westward to Stowmarket, and from the Stonhams south-westward to Needham Market.

It also occurs in north Suffolk in the Waveney Valleys from outside the district boundary (Hopton) eastward to Hoxne and in patches to the east at Weybread and Mendham.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. The valleys form relatively narrow bands of well-drained terraces and slopes above the valley floors.
- II. Small valley areas such as at Thelnetham provide intimate pockets of landscape.
- III. Due to the geological background there are frequent occurrences of dry heaths as at Wortham Ling, Stuston Common, Warren Hills, Shotford Heath and Woolpit Heath.
- IV. The river terrace heaths were exploited as commons as a source of grazing and the gathering of gorse for cattle fodder. Some of these areas are retained as unimproved open areas such as Wortham Ling, whereas others were enclosed and converted.
- V. The landscape has good tree cover and a few fragmented woodlands and hedgerows of multiple species including oak, ash, field maple and hawthorn.
- VI. The remnants of heath are dominated by poor dry grassland and gorse (or furze).
- VII. The Gipping valley and the Woolpit Heath area are particular areas of change within this landscape character.



Views toward Earl Stonham

## **Settlement Character**

- I. Numerous villages and hamlets with medieval churches were formed, however, only isolated churches such as the one at Redgrave are still in existence.
- II. Villages tend to be more tightly clustered than is common for the north of Suffolk.



Panoramic view near Woolpit

III. The river terraces support the larger settlements such as Woolpit and Botesdale.

IV. As a valley side landscape any new buildings are likely to have a significant impact on both the character and visual impact on this landscape.

V. The setting of Historic villages, buildings and monuments blend within this landscape and is sensitive to alterations and or new development which can have a significant negative impact in the existing visual quality.

VI. In particular consideration needs to be taken with regards to the impact on the “skyline” and “roofscape” on the sides of the valleys.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the rolling valley landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the existing settlement pattern clusters.

### **Objectives**

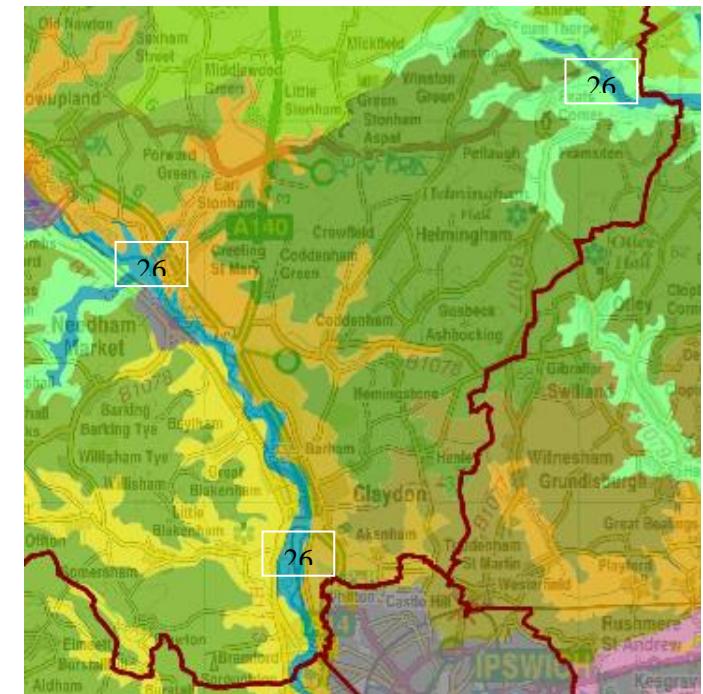
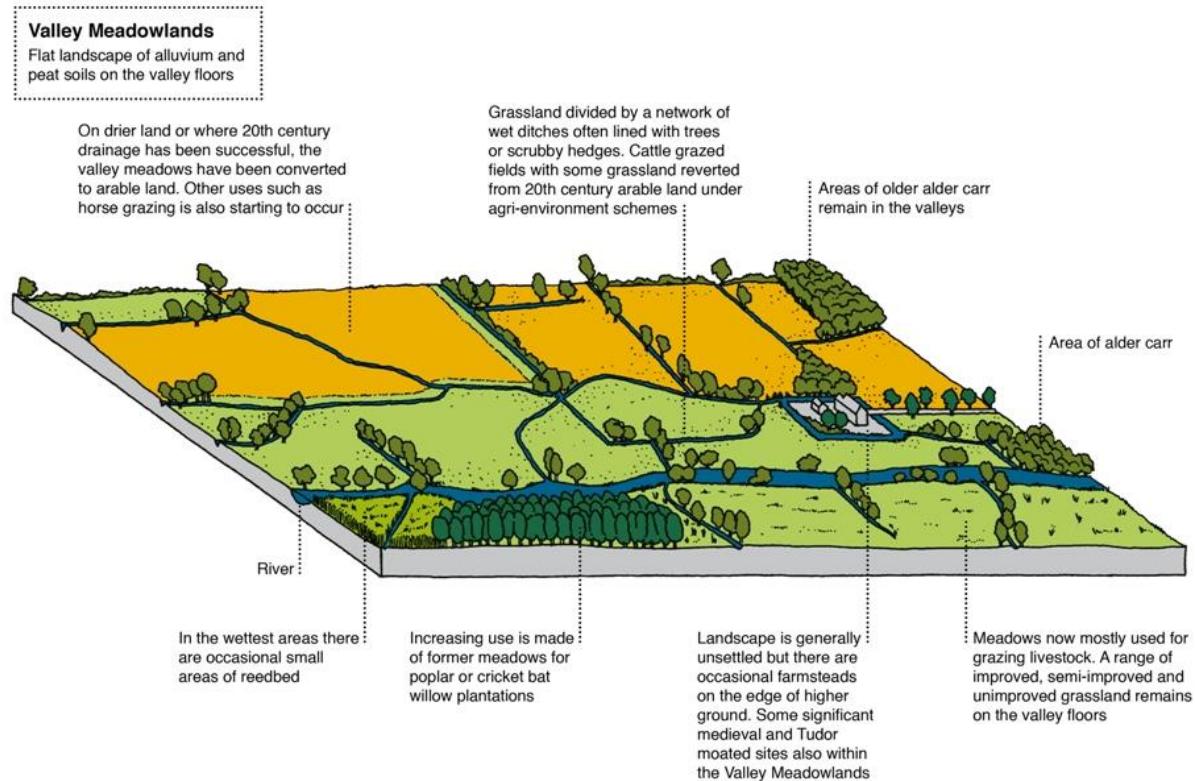
- To maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape and settlement pattern.
- To safeguard the historic features
- To minimise visual intrusion on the very sensitive landscape include impact on the skyline.
- To safeguard the heathland and open space areas
- To safeguard and increase the woodland, tree and hedgerow cover.

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Due to the rolling landscape all development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the potential visual impact on Conservation Areas
- II. Reinforce the Heathland and open space features in new developments.

- III. Woodlands, trees and hedgerows are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- IV. Roofscapes are to be in keeping with existing development within this visually sensitive landscape.
- V. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the impact on the ecological environment.

## (26) – Valley Meadowlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

## **Villages and towns -**

Needham Market

### **Key Characteristics**

In Mid Suffolk the flat river valley floor landscape banks along The Gipping from Ipswich upstream to Stowmarket and along a tributary to Battisford.

### **Landscape Character**

- I. In some places there are ancient meres, as at Bosmere in the Gipping valley and more recently lakes have been created by the exploitation of underlying gravel deposits, especially in the Gipping valley.
- II. The pattern of meadows divided by ditches and dykes are a characteristic feature of the landscape.
- III. Few woodlands exist in this land character however there are some alder carrs and plantations
- IV. Some of these landscapes are in excellent condition and are fine examples of pristine and picturesque meadows in a wider farmed landscape, and if accessible, can provide an oasis of enclosure and confined views.
- V. The sense of tranquillity of this landscape however, can also be impacted upon by the development of the adjacent Rolling Valley landscapes (18), which are often a focus for settlement and development.
- VI. This landscape character provides a valuable service as floodplains with the changing seasons provides the countryside with an ever changing landscape pattern.
- VII. This landscape also provides a valuable ecological environment.

### **Settlement Character**

- I. Occasional farmsteads can be found on the edge of the valley.
- II. The landscape meanders around the edges of and through the surrounding village providing natural patterns for development.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the valley meadowlands landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern

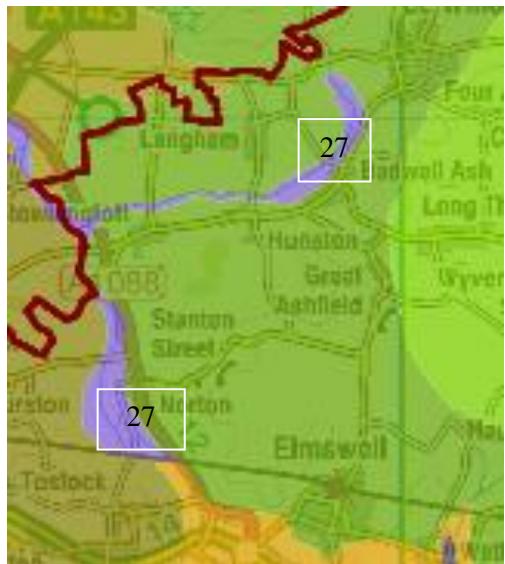
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas and the settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- To safeguard the historic features
- To reinforce and enhance meadows and retain the existing field boundaries
- To safeguard the plantation areas
- To protect and enhance the ecological environment
- To safeguard the floodplains
- To safeguard the tranquillity of the area

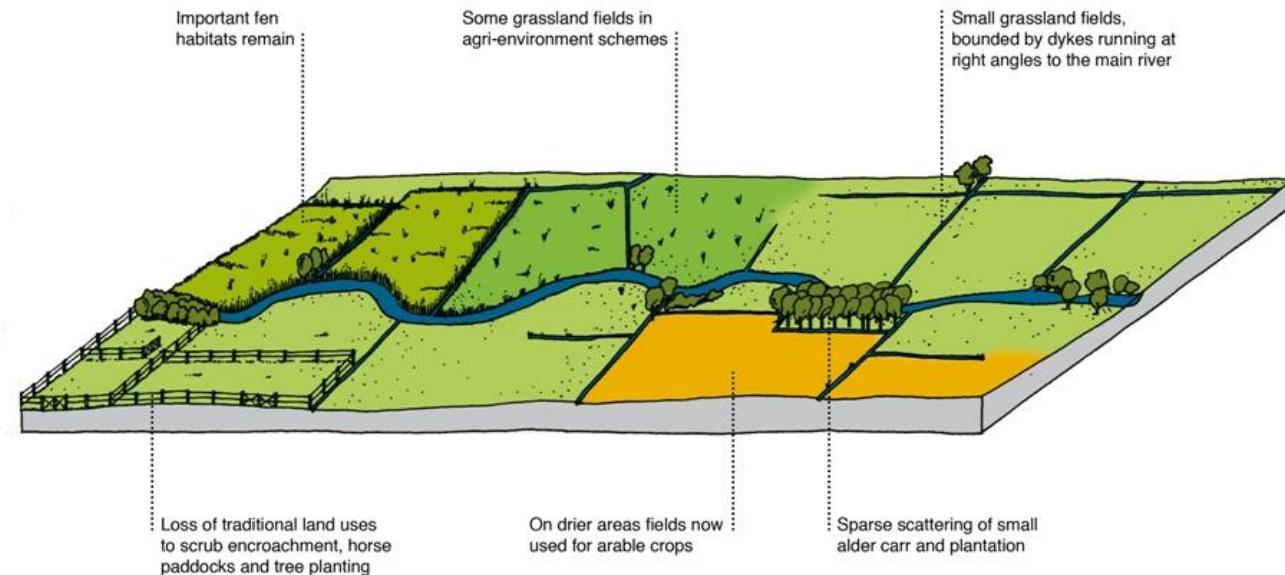
### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Any development that impacts upon the historic sites will be accompanied by a management plan or other detailed evidence to support the proposals.
- II. Any changes or developments will have a significant effect on the landscape therefore all proposals should provide mitigation strategies to minimise the detrimental impact on both the visual amenity and the landscape character of the valley floor
- III. The natural drainage system of the ditches and dykes are to be retained and restored.
- IV. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the impact on floodplains and the ecological environment.
- V. Retains the scenic and tranquil quality of the Valley Meadowlands Landscape

## (27) – Valley Meadows and Fens



**Valley Meadows and Fens**  
Flat, narrow, river valleys often with deep peat soils



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

**Villages and towns –**  
No Settlements

## **Key Characteristics**

This landscape occurs like a thin tendril along the Black Bourn, a tributary of the River Lark, from across the district boundary (St Edmundsbury District), downstream towards Norton and east through Stowlangtoft and west of Walsham-le-Willows.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. This landscape character comprises of flat, narrow, river valley bottoms.
- II. This marginal land has mainly been divided up by ditches and dykes into small grassland fields and integrated into the larger farming areas, however, recent times has seen this land, such as at Norton on the Black Bourne, replaced by set-aside or managed as grassland.
- III. These valleys are all found in wider estate type landscape such as the parkland found at Stowlangtoft.
- IV. Although some tree and woodland cover is found within this landscape character, in the form of alder carrs and plantations woodlands, they do not dominate this landscape.
- V. The Valley Meadowlands and Fens are mostly narrow and enclosed by higher land which can be significantly affected by changes of use, management or development on the valley sides.

## **Settlement Character**

- I. There are no settlements along the valley floors, except the occasional isolated farmstead.

## **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the valley meadows and fens landscape with appropriate planting and sympathetic management of the landscape features.

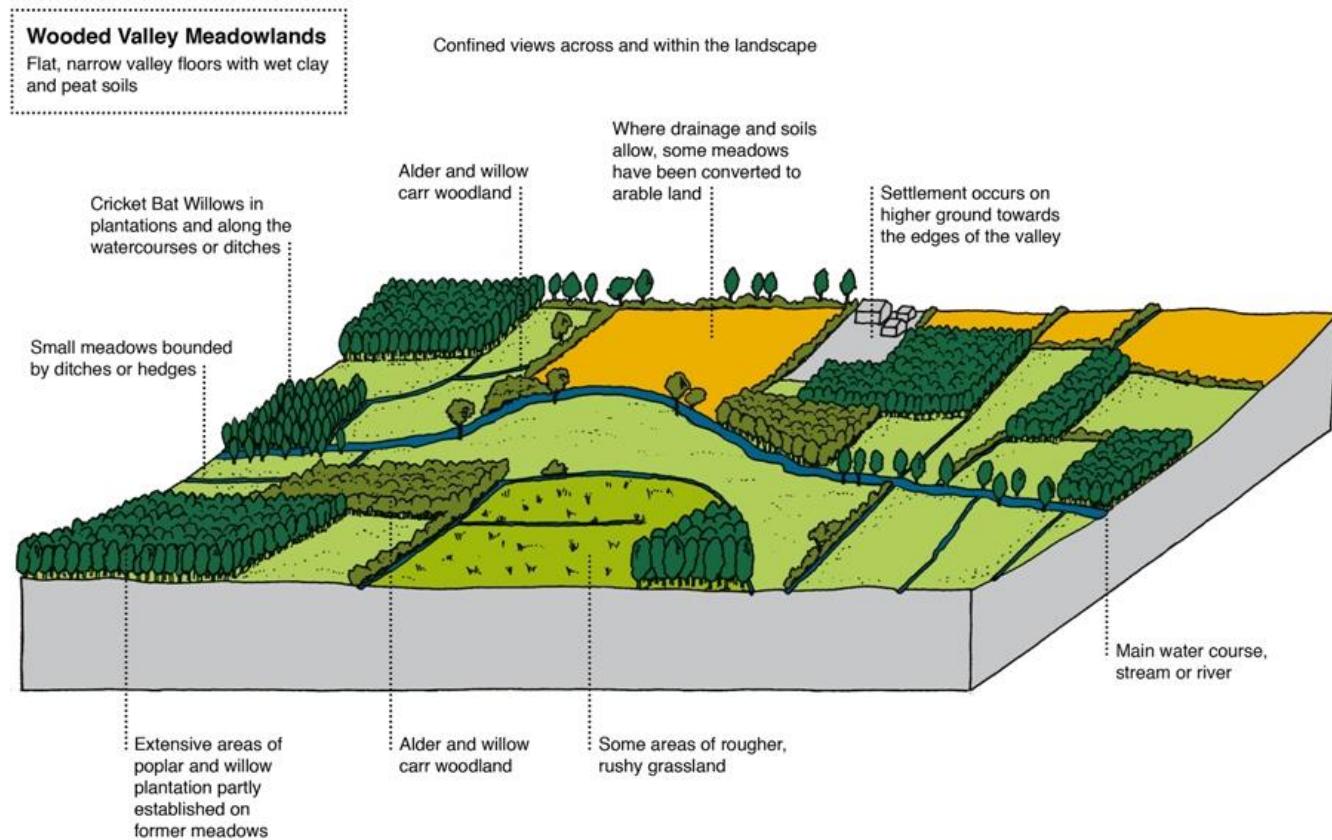
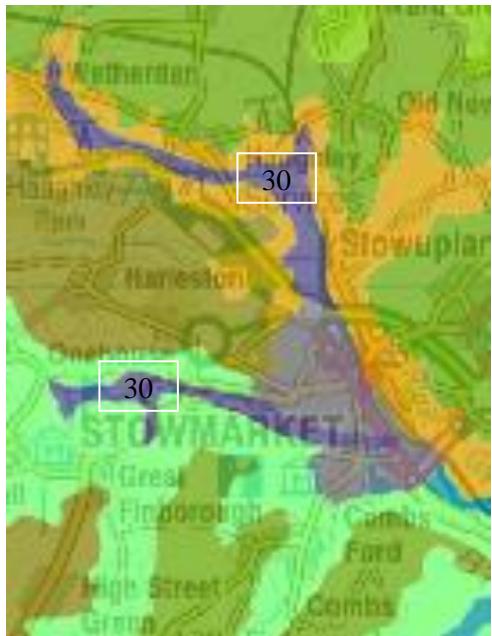
## **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas.
- To reinforce and enhance the pattern of meadows and retain the existing field boundaries
- To safeguard and maintain the balance of grassland and plantation areas
- Restore and retain the pattern of dykes and ditches
- To safeguard the tranquillity of the area

## **Key Design Principles**

- I. Any changes or developments will have a significant effect on the landscape therefore all proposals should provide mitigation strategies to minimise the detrimental impact on both the visual amenity and the landscape character of the valley floor
- II. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area.
- III. Alder carrs and woodland plantations are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- IV. The natural drainage system of the ditches and dykes are to be retained and restored.
- V. Retains the scenic and tranquil quality of the Valley Meadows and Fen Landscape

## (30) – Wooded Valley Meadowlands



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns –

Dagworth, Haughley New Street, Wetherden

## **Key Characteristics**

This landscape is only found in one area of Suffolk, in the valleys of the western tributaries of the upper Gipping valley in Mid Suffolk; the Rattlesden River valley from Stowmarket and Combs to Great Finborough and the valley of a stream that flows from Stowmarket through Haughley and Wetherden.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. A flat valley floor landscape of grassland and some arable with small carr and plantation woodlands.
- II. This landscape character consists of small meadows bounded by ditches, and areas of hedges and trees.
- III. These meadowlands are all found within a larger farming landscape.
- IV. Plantations and alder carr woodland is a regular feature of this landscape character with an equal balance of wooded and grassland areas.
- V. In Great Finborough the valley floor was incorporated into the landscape park at Finborough Hall.
- VI. The Wooded Valley Meadowlands are mostly narrow and enclosed by woodland and higher land which can be significantly affected by changes of use, management or development on the valley sides.

## **Settlement Character**

- I. Settlements occupy the higher land towards the edges with isolated settlements occurring within this landscape character, such as Dagworth Hall.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the wooded valley meadowlands landscape with appropriate planting and sympathetic management of the landscape features.

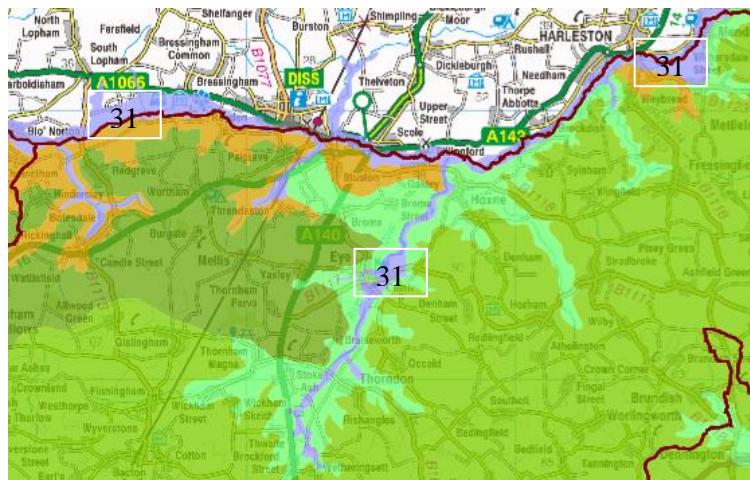
### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas.
- To reinforce and enhance the pattern of meadows and retain the existing field boundaries
- To safeguard, restore and maintain the balance of grassland and plantation areas
- Restore and retain the pattern of dykes and ditches
- To minimise visual intrusion on the very sensitive landscape include impact on the skyline.
- To safeguard the tranquillity of the area

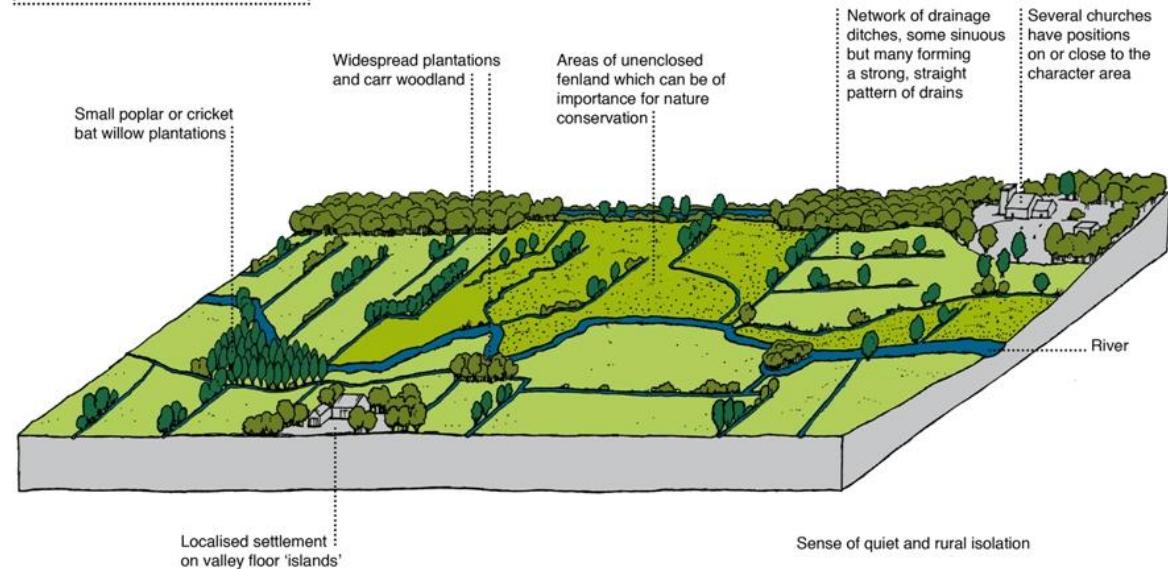
## **Key Design Principles**

- I. Any changes or developments will have a significant effect on the landscape therefore all proposals should provide mitigation strategies to minimise the detrimental impact on both the visual amenity and the landscape character of the valley floor
- II. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the impact on the ecological environment
- III. Alder carrs and woodland plantations are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- IV. The natural drainage system of the ditches and dykes are to be retained and restored.
- V. Roofscapes are to be in keeping with existing development within this very sensitive landscape.
- VI. Retains the scenic and tranquil quality of the Wooded Valley Meadowlands Landscape

## (31) – Wooded Valley Meadowlands and Fens



**Wooded Valley Meadowlands and Fens**  
Flat valley bottom with extensive peat deposits. Cattle grazed pastures



Source - SLCA <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk>

### Villages and towns –

Eye, Mendham, Rickinghall, Wetheringsett (CA)

## **Key Characteristics**

This landscape character is only found in two interlinked river valleys on the northern boundary of Suffolk including a thin section of Mid Suffolk; from outside the district boundary (Suffolk Coastal District) along the valley of the Waveney westwards into Mid Suffolk, including Mendham Marshes and part of Stuston Common and ending in Redgrave and Lopham Fen. Then southward along the River Dove to Eye and Wetheringsett.

Then along The Little Ouse, from Redgrave and Lopham Fen westward to Hinderclay Fen, Thelnetham Fen and across the district boundary into St Edmundsbury District, and including some tributary valleys such as that at Botesdale and the Serpentine Lake at Redgrave Park.

## **Landscape Character**

- I. This landscape consists of damp flat valley floors largely dominated by grassland, with pockets of small carr woodlands and willow plantations.
- II. Woodland is an important component of this landscape, most notably west of Mendham.
- III. In places like the Waveney valley around Mendham, the flat valley floors are flanked by quite high and steep slopes, giving an enclosed feeling that is rare within the generally very open East Anglian landscape.
- IV. Un-drainable areas have been left as fens, marshes or pasture, although some pasture land has been converted or allowed natural colonisation by woodland.
- V. Some important semi-wild fens still exist in this landscape, such as at Redgrave/Lopham (the largest river valley fen in England), Thelnetham, Thrandeston and Thorndon Fen.
- VI. Although surrounded by an urban infrastructure this landscape character maintains the impression of an undisturbed, quiet hidden landscape.

## **Settlement Character**

- I. Mendham is the only village within this landscape character in Mid Suffolk.
- II. Syleham church also occupies an isolated position within the valley whilst a number of other churches are positioned close to or on the landscape boundary such as Thelnetham and Rickinghall Inferior.

### **Aims**

- To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthening the wooded valley meadowlands and fens landscape with appropriate planting and sympathetic management of the landscape features.

### **Objectives**

- To maintain and enhance the landscape areas.
- To reinforce and enhance the pattern of meadows and retain the existing field boundaries
- To safeguard, restore and maintain the fens, marshes, pasture and plantation areas
- To safeguard and enhance the woodland cover.
- To protect and enhance the ecological environment
- To minimise visual intrusion on the very sensitive landscape include impact on the skyline.
- To safeguard the undisturbed tranquillity of the area

### **Key Design Principles**

- I. Any changes or developments will have a significant effect on the landscape therefore all proposals should provide mitigation strategies to minimise the detrimental impact on both the visual amenity and the landscape character of the valley floor
- II. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the impact on the ecological environment
- III. Alder carrs and woodland plantations are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- IV. Fens, marshes and pasture areas are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- V. Roofscapes are to be in keeping with existing development within this very sensitive landscape.
- VI. Retains the undisturbed scenic and tranquil quality of the hidden Wooded Valley Meadowlands Landscape