

## Historic characterisation and sensitivity assessment

GNGP preferred option growth areas.



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## 1.0 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **2.0 Scope**

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

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

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

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

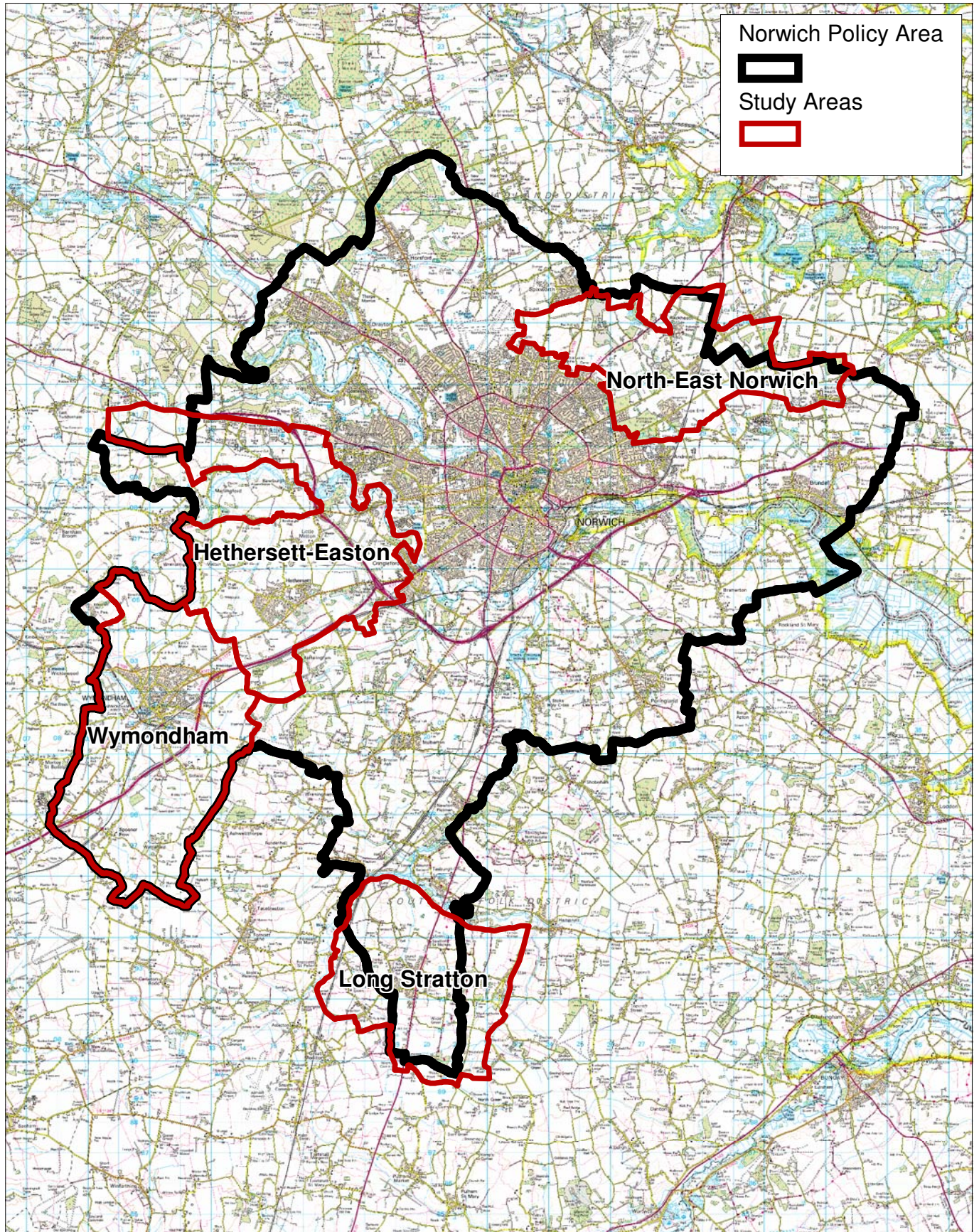


# Figure 1. Study Areas

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



Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009







### 3.0 Methodology

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

#### 3.1 *Historic characterisation zones*

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

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

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

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

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

#### *Issues/Constraints*

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

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

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

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

### **3.2 Sensitivity assessment**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### *A qualitative approach*

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

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

Definitions of significance and robustness:

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

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

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

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

*Sensitivity = significance and robustness combined*

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

### **3.3 Assessment process**

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

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<sup>3</sup> Hampshire County Council *ibid* p 7

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

- Archaeology
- Historic Landscape Character
- Historic Built Environment

### *Archaeology (ARCH)*

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

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

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

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

### *Historic landscape character (HLC)*

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

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

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

### *Historic built environment (HBE)*

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

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

### *Assessment conclusions*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>5</sup> Hampshire County Council *ibid* p 6

### 3.4 Sensitivity matrices

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

Fig 2 Sensitivity matrix

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

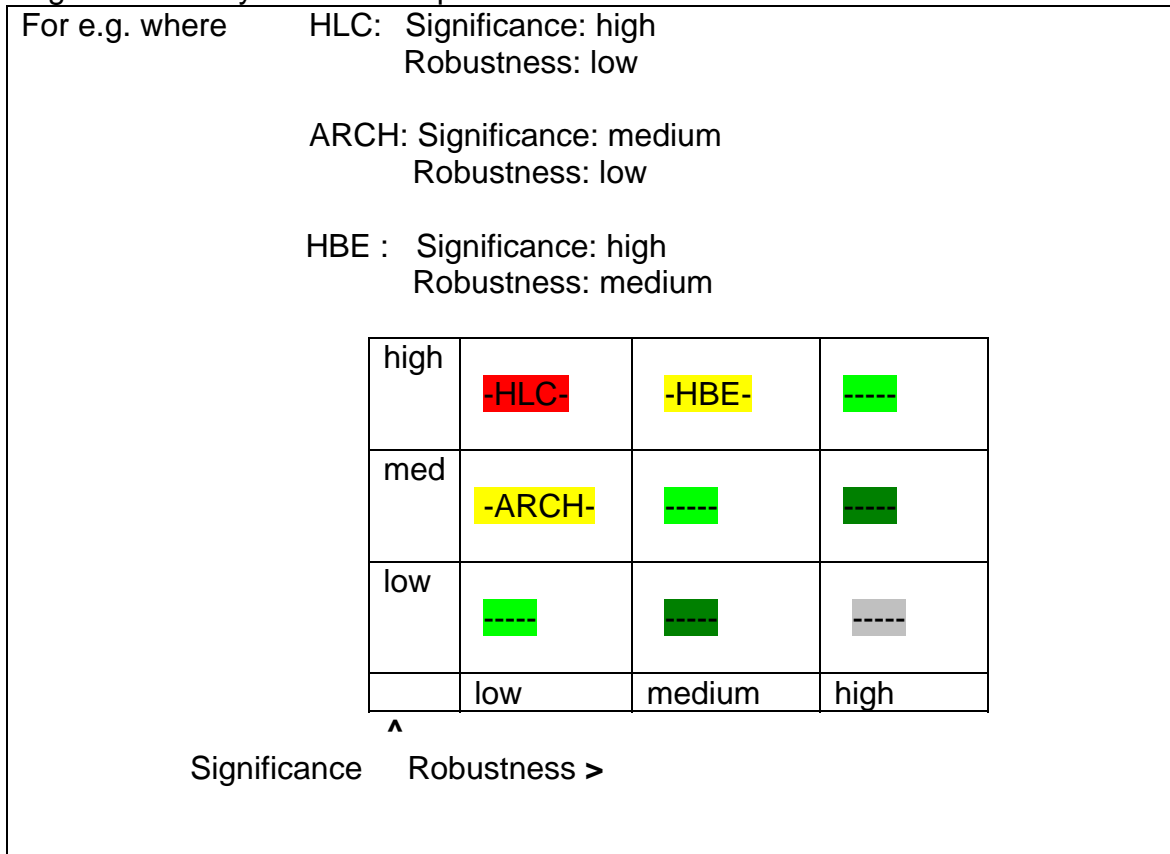
^  
Significance    Robustness >

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

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



Fig 3: Sensitivity matrix example



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

Fig 4 Hampshire Threshold criteria

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

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

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

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

### **3.5 *Future study***

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

#### **4 Sensitivity summary reports**

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

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## **Study Area: 1**

### **LONG STRATTON**

#### **Overview**

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

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

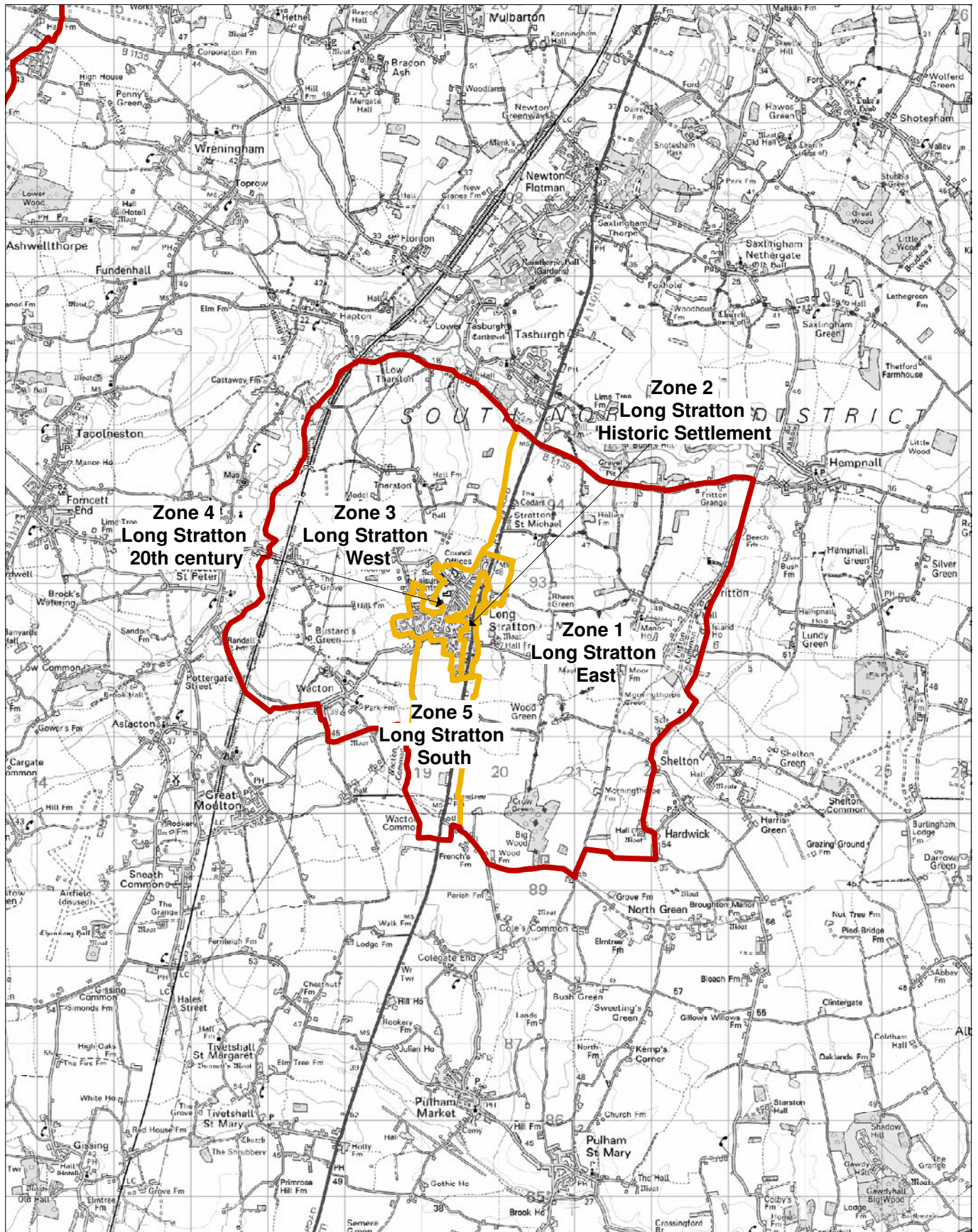
Within this particular area the Roman Pye Road (A140) is a significant feature, visible in the landscape, and the reason for Long Stratton's location. In addition the road influences the shape and arrangement of field boundaries either side of its length, and possibly the layout of the ancient road network,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

# Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 1: Long Stratton

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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





**Zone: 1 Long Stratton East****LCA cross reference**

E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland  
B1 Tas Tributary Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 55, 57 and 59

**Characteristics summary**

- grid system of track ways
- Remnant medieval settlements with related earthworks
- Greens and commons
- boundary loss
- Areas of piecemeal enclosure by agreement
- Isolated farmsteads
- 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century vernacular buildings
- small 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century woodland plantations

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>Zone: 1 Long Stratton East</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
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<b>Zone: 2 Long Stratton historic settlement</b>
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**LCA cross reference**

B1 Tas Tributary Farmland
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**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 51
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**Characteristics summary**

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

**Qualitative summary**

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

<b>Zone 2 Long Stratton historic settlement</b>	<b>HIGH-MEDIUM</b>
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**Zone: 3 Long Stratton west****LCA cross reference**

B1 Tas Tributary Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 53, 54, 58

**Characteristics summary**

- Roman, Saxon & Medieval archaeological sites.
- Deserted villages
- Dispersed farmsteads
- Common greens
- 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed buildings
- boundary loss

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment****Zone: 3 West of Long Stratton****MEDIUM**

**Zone: 4 Long Stratton 20<sup>th</sup> century settlement****LCA cross reference**

B1 Tas Tributary Farmland  
E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 52

**Characteristics summary**

- Field and road patterns
- Settlement pattern
- Archaeological remains

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>Zone: Long Stratton 20thC Settlement</b>	<b>LOW</b>
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**NB**

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

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

E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 55

**Characteristics summary**

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

**Qualitative summary**

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

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

## Study Area: 2

### WYMONDHAM

#### Overview

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

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

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

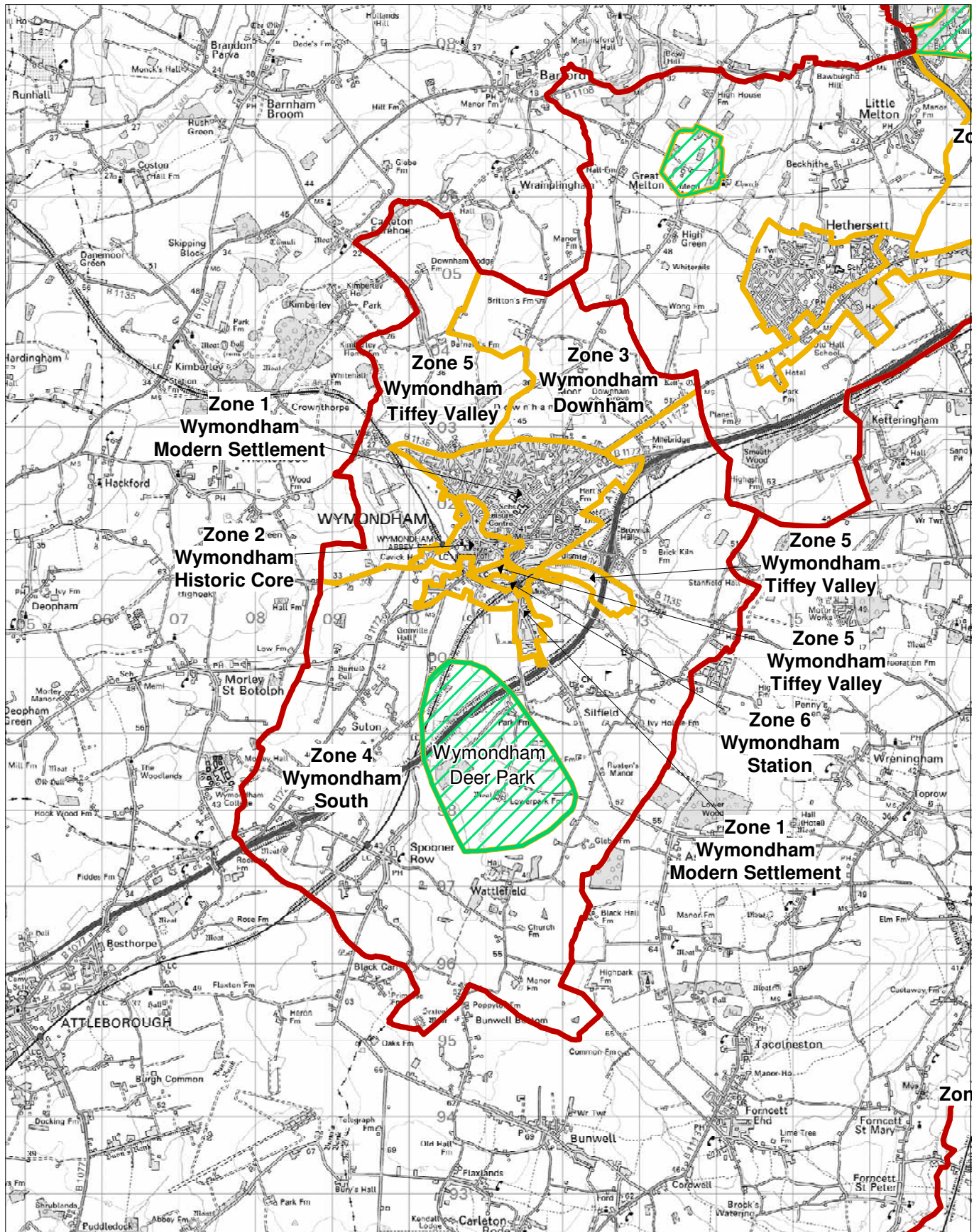
In the 10<sup>th</sup> century the route between Viking-established Norwich and Thetford passing through Wymondham increased in importance, bringing with it extra trade and prosperity. During the late 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries the area was further transformed through the ownership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

# Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 2: Wymondham

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology  
Union House  
Gressenhall  
East Dereham  
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**Zone: 1 Wymondham****LCA cross reference**

D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 43 and 44

**Characteristics summary**

- Historic roads and trackways
- Boundary loss
- Industrial archaeology

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>Zone 1 Wymondham C20th</b>	<b>LOW</b>
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## **Zone: 2 Wymondham Historic Core**

### **LCA cross reference**

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland

### **Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 45

### **Characteristics summary**

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

### **Qualitative summary**

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

### **Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>Wymondham historic core</b>	<b>HIGH-MEDIUM</b>
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**Zone: 3 Wymondham Downham****LCA cross reference**

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland  
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 34, 35, 36, 42

**Characteristics summary**

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

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>Zone 3: Wymondham Downham</b>	<b>LOW</b>
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## **Zone: 4 Wymondham South**

### **LCA cross reference**

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

### **Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 34, 40, 42, 44, 49

### **Characteristics summary**

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

### **Qualitative summary**

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

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>4 Wymondham South</b>	<b><i>MEDIUM</i></b> <b><i>(Deer Park HIGH-MEDIUM)</i></b>
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**Zone: 5 Wymondham Tiffey Valley****LCA cross reference**

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland  
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 36, 40, 41, 42

**Characteristics summary**

- River valley
- Field boundaries of late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure
- Isolated 19<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads
- Abbey at head of the valley

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>5 Wymondham Tiffey valley</b>	<b>HIGH-MEDIUM</b>
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**Zone: 6 Wymondham Station****LCA cross reference**

B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 45

**Characteristics summary**

- 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial development
- 19<sup>th</sup> century designed landscape feature

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment****Zone 6: Wymondham station****HIGH-MEDIUM**

### Study Area: 3

#### HETHERSETT-EASTON

##### Overview

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

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

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

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

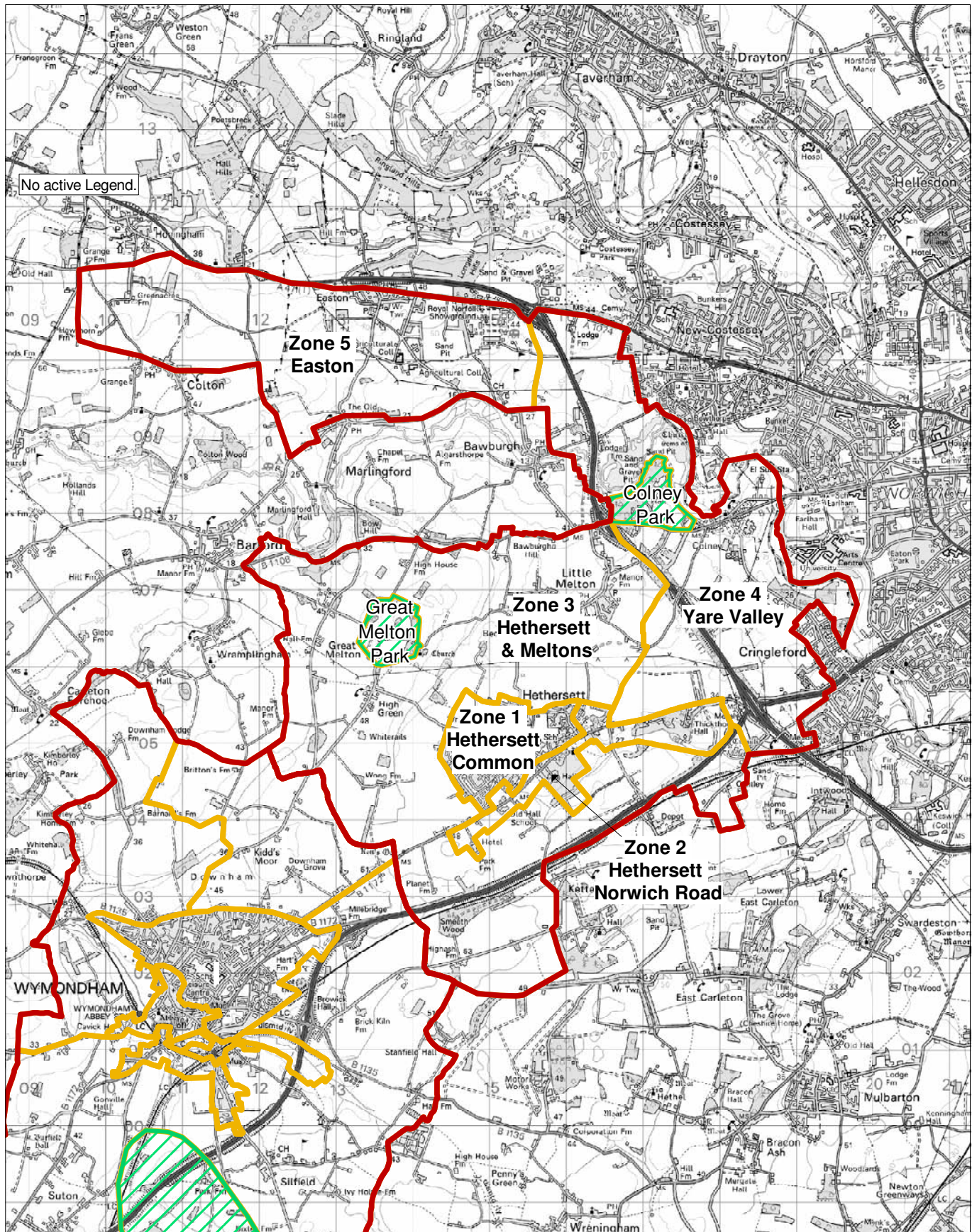
Running broadly west-east through this area, the River Yare produces another settlement pattern of hamlets which developed around river crossings, with associated buildings such as bridges and mills, and pastoral river meadows.

# Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 3: Hethersett

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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Union House  
Gressenhall  
East Dereham  
Norfolk  
NR20 4DR







**Zone: 1 Hethersett Common****LCA cross reference**

D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 32, 33

**Characteristics summary**

- Greens and commons
- boundary loss
- 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century vernacular buildings

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

**1 Hethersett common**

**LOW-MEDIUM**

**Zone: 2 Hethersett Norwich Road****LCA cross reference**

C1 Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland  
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 30, 31, 33

**Characteristics summary**

- Church/hall settlement
- Country houses and parks
- Major road

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>Zone 2: Hethersett Norwich Road</b>	<b>HIGH-MEDIUM</b>
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### **Zone: 3 Hethersett & Meltons**

#### **LCA cross reference**

C1 Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland  
D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

#### **Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

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

#### **Characteristics summary**

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

#### **Qualitative summary**

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

#### **Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>Hethersett &amp; Meltons</b> <i>(Great Melton Park)</i>	<b>MEDIUM</b> <b><i>HIGH-MEDIUM</i></b>
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## **Zone: 4 Yare Valley**

### **LCA cross reference**

C1 Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland  
F1 Yare Valley Urban Fringe

### **Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 19, 20, 21, 23

### **Characteristics summary**

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

### **Qualitative summary**

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

### **Overall sensitivity assessment**

Yare Valley ( <i>Colney Park</i> )	HIGH-MEDIUM <i>HIGH-MEDIUM</i> )
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**Zone: 5 Easton****LCA cross reference**

G1 Easton Fringe Farmland

**Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 17, 18, 23

**Characteristics summary**

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

**Qualitative summary**

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

**Overall sensitivity assessment**

**5 Easton**

**LOW**

## Study Area: 4

### NORTH-EAST NORWICH

#### Overview

The north-east Norwich Growth Area lies at the south-easterly extent of the National Landscape Character Area No.78 'Central North Norfolk'. Key characteristics of this wider area include: extensive sand and gravel deposits; areas of heathland; relatively well-wooded landscapes; a predominantly arable agricultural economy, dispersed villages, isolated farmsteads and a large number of small to medium sized eighteenth-century estates and parkland.

The study area lies to the north east of Norwich, in an area of mainly light, sandy land, sub-divided by the various roads radiating out from the city. To the north of Norwich the formerly rural landscape of isolated farms and small parks is subject to various modern influences: the Norwich International airport; modern Spixworth settlement area; the northern suburbs and urban amenity uses.

East of the B1150 North Walsham Road, the landscape changes and is largely defined by a group of historic parklands (Beeston St Andrew, Rackheath, Sprowston and Sprowston Lodge) and woodland. The plantation belts of the parks, along with an area of ancient woodland fragments around Dobbs Beck/The Springs where the boundaries of Beeston St Andrew, Rackheath and Sprowston converge, contribute to the generally well-wooded appearance of the area.

To the east of Rackheath Park, a level plateau of arable farmland, bounded by roads and railway, was requisitioned in 1943 to become an airfield of the USAAF. Today, most of the airfield infrastructure has been removed, although the line of the main runway survives, highlighted by one of the narrow plantation belts that criss-cross the area.

The area to the south of the former airfield and parks was formerly part of the vast Mousehold Heath, some 6000 acres of heathland that extended eastwards to Woodbastwick until it was subject to a series of parliamentary enclosures in the early nineteenth century. This area is now in mixed use and the light lands are frequently cultivated. Closer to Norwich are a number of blocks of nineteenth-century mixed coniferous and broadleaf plantation and there are areas of interwar (and later) housing development at Thorpe End and New Rackheath.

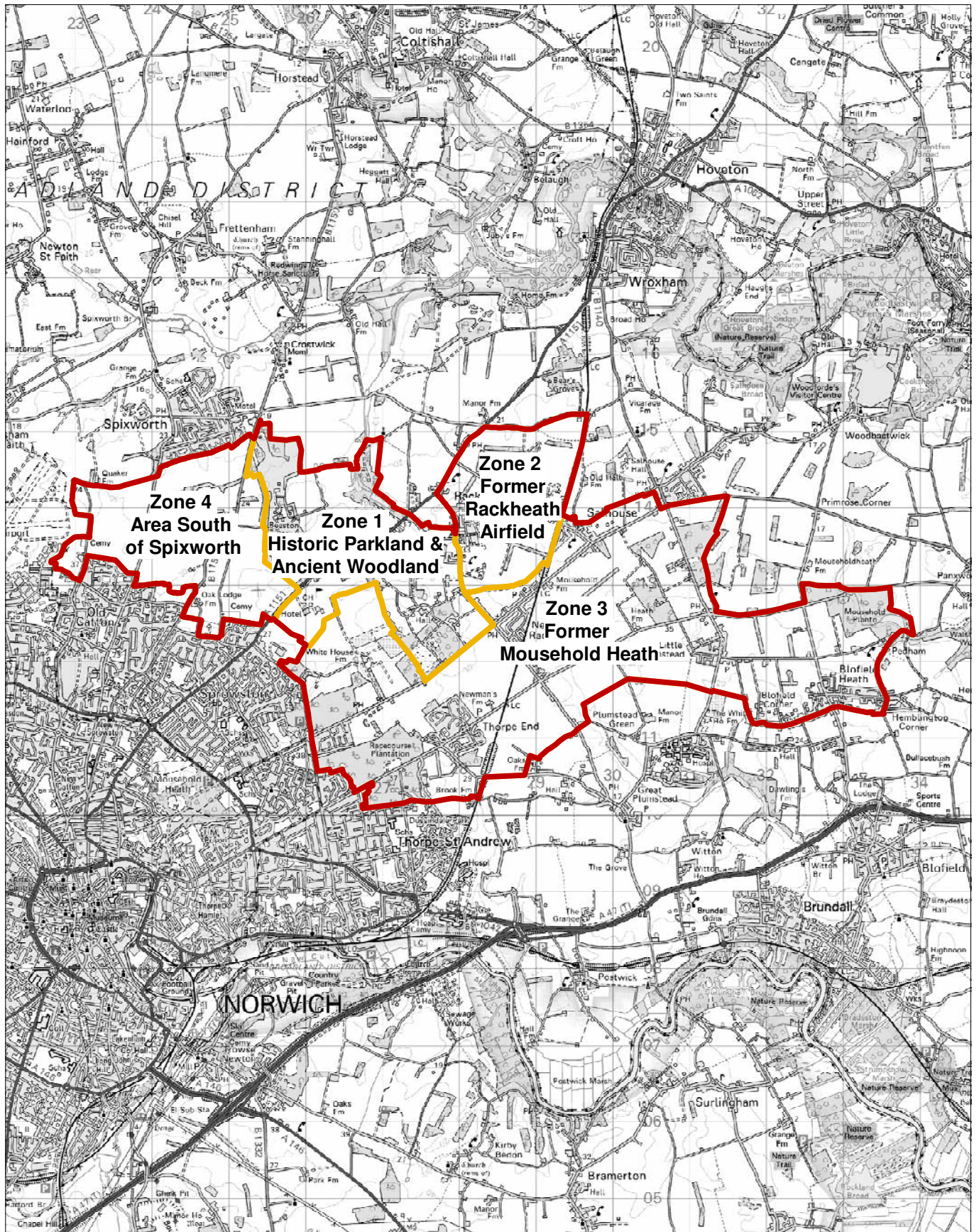
The former heathland is reflected in minor place-names and traces of characteristically heathland vegetation (e.g gorse and bracken) can be found throughout the area, notably along the roadside verges.

# Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 4: North-East Norwich

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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## **Zone 1: The Parks and Ancient Woodland**

### **LCA cross reference**

E3 and E4 Spixworth and Rackheath and Salhouse Wooded Estate lands

### **Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 11

### **Characteristics summary**

- Cluster of historic landscape parks
- Formal architectural style (Halls and parkland buildings)
- Parkland landscape features
- Mature landscape structure including a series of blocks of ancient woodland.
- Wider rural setting of landscape parks.

### **Qualitative summary**

This zone contains a notable group of four historic landscape parks with their associated halls and park buildings and unusually for north-east Norfolk, a series of blocks of ancient woodland. Although of at least sixteenth century origins, the parkland features that survive are predominantly of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Robustness is affected by condition and fragmented ownership but mainly the proposed Northern Distributor Road which would have a direct adverse impact on two of the parks.

### **Overall sensitivity assessment**

**Zone 1: The Parks and Ancient Woodland**

**HIGH-MEDIUM**

## **Zone 2: Former Rackheath Airfield**

### **LCA cross reference**

E4 Rackheath and Salhouse Wooded Estate Lands

### **Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 12

### **Characteristics summary**

- Level arable plateau
- Long lines of plantation belts
- Line of former main, N-S runway and other fragmentary remains of WWII airfield.

### **Qualitative summary**

This zone comprises the former Rackheath USAAF Airfield site now in mainly agricultural use. Traces are still visible in the landscape notably the line of the main runway, and several buildings survive within the modern industrial estate. The construction of the airfield largely erased the earlier landscape pattern which was one of numerous hedged piecemeal and parliamentary enclosures. The former boundary of Mousehold Heath survives to the south of the site.

The site is vulnerable in terms of its archaeological potential. Robustness is otherwise affected by the amount of change that has already taken place.

### **Overall sensitivity assessment**

<b>Zone 2: Former Rackheath Airfield</b>	<b>LOW-MEDIUM</b>
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### **Zone 3: Former Mousehold Heath Area**

#### **LCA cross reference**

E4 Spixworth Wooded Estate Lands

#### **Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 14

#### **Characteristics summary**

- Linear road and boundary form with 19thC rectilinear fields.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century farmsteads
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century woodland plantation blocks
- Compact 20<sup>th</sup>C settlement areas in a wider rural setting

#### **Qualitative summary**

This zone relates to the former Mousehold Heath. This was once a 6000 acre heathland stretching eastwards from Norwich to Woodbastwick. Common rights were held by the inhabitants of the adjoining villages until the area was reorganised through a series of parliamentary enclosures in the years around 1800. Settlement was historically restricted to the edges of the heath. The enclosures meant a reorganisation of the road network. A series of rectangular fields and farmsteads were established along the main roads across the former Heath. A number of elements of this early nineteenth century landscape survive along with new areas of settlement which were established in the 1930s at New Rackheath and Thorpe End.

Heathland character is still reflected in minor place-names, aspects of land use and vegetation (coniferous plantations and bracken lined grass verges).

Robustness is affected by proposed Northern Distributor Road along with the change that has already taken place.

#### **Overall sensitivity assessment**

**Zone 3: Former Mousehold Heath Area**

**LOW-MEDIUM**

## **Zone 4: Area South of Spixworth**

### **LCA cross reference**

E4 Spixworth Wooded Estate Lands

### **Archaeological character zones cross-reference**

ACZ 8 and 10

### **Characteristics summary**

- Mixed agricultural and urban fringe uses
- Nineteenth and early twentieth century boundary loss
- Some woodland belts
- Small historic parks

### **Qualitative summary**

This formerly rural zone contains a mixture of agricultural and urban fringe uses (park and ride, sports fields etc). Although this zone contains one extant medieval church (Sprowston) and one lost church site (Beeston St Andrew) there is little trace of historic settlement.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the local population of both Spixworth and Beeston St Andrew was only around 50. The area was one of isolated farm sites and two small parks (Oak Lodge and Red Hall). The landscape of small fields around sinuous older lanes was rationalised into larger units in the late nineteenth century and again in the twentieth century.

Although this zone contains pockets of historic interest, the mixed uses and peripheral activity means that overall it is lacking cohesion.

Robustness is affected by the proposed Northern Distributor Road and the change that has already taken place.

### **Overall sensitivity assessment**

**Zone 4: Area South of Spixworth**

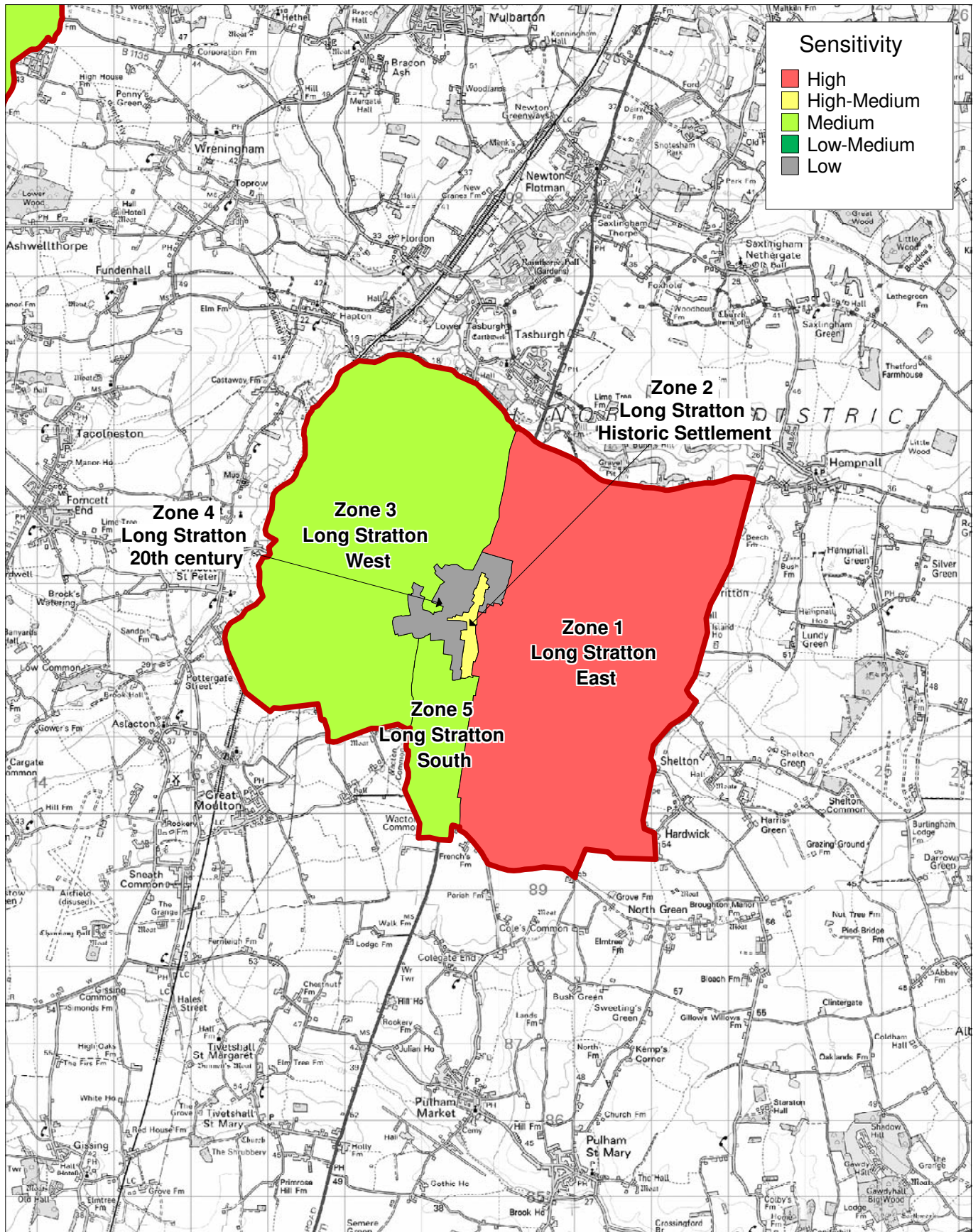
**LOW-MEDIUM**

# Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 1: Long Stratton

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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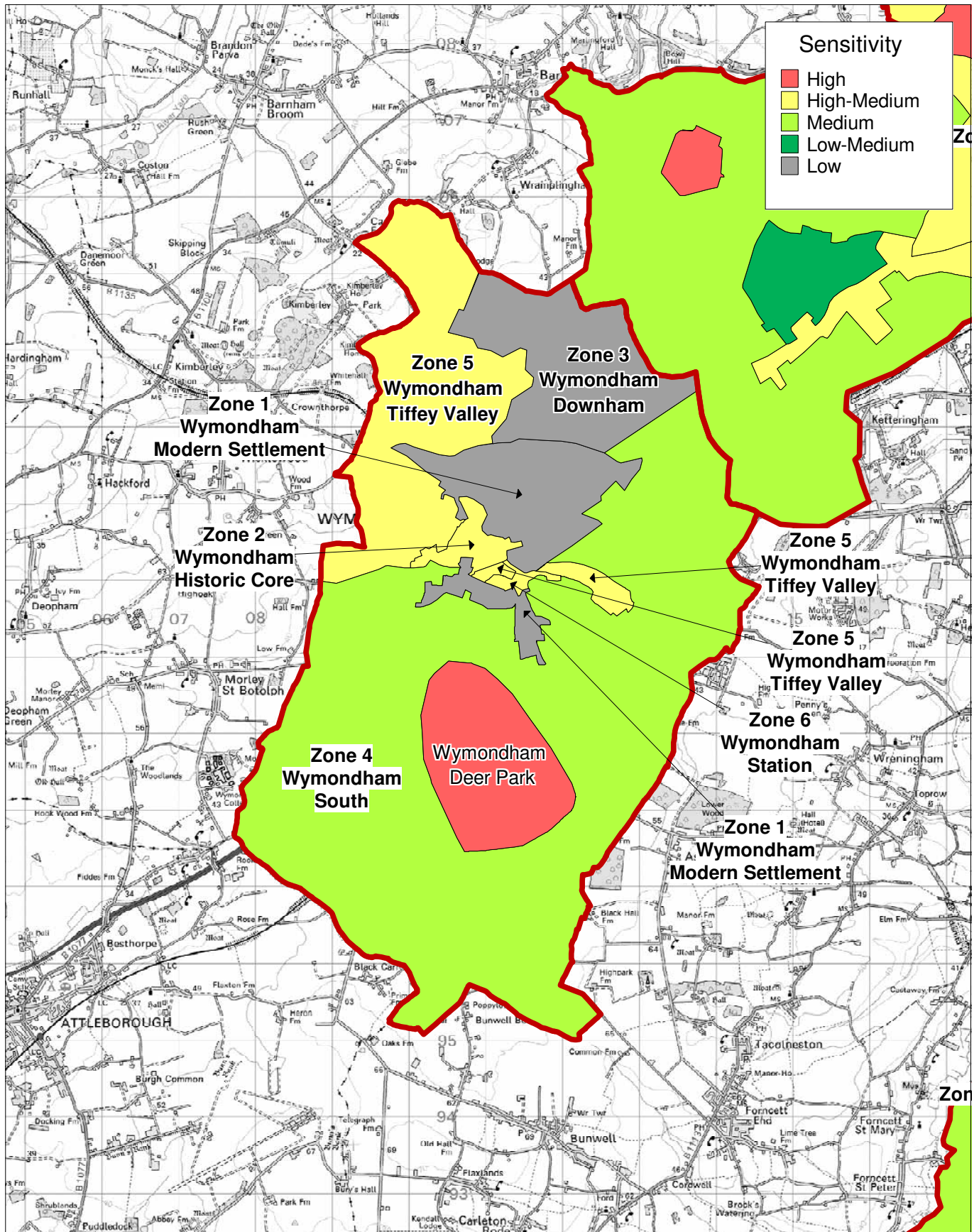


# Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 2: Wymondham

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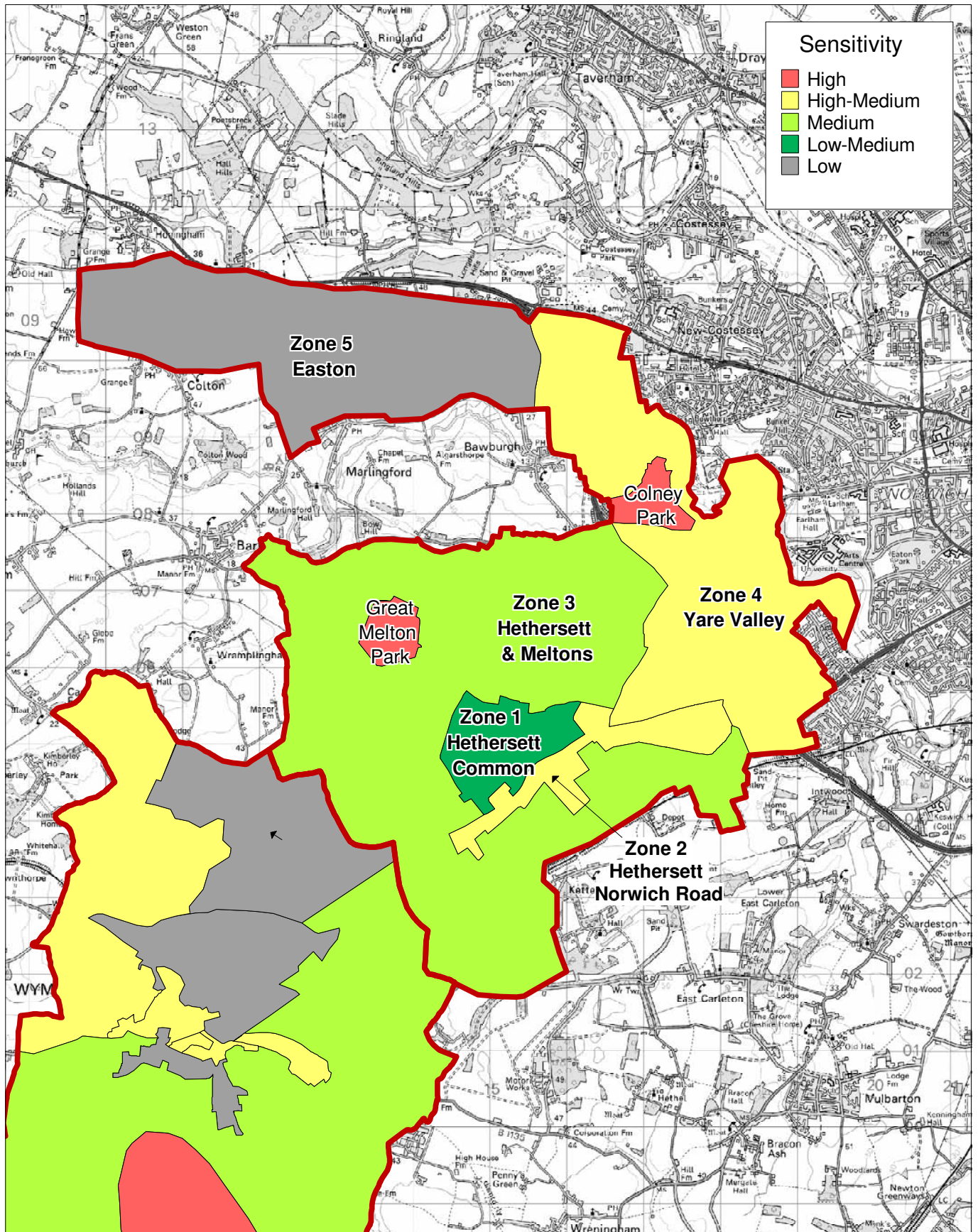


# Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 3: Hethersett-Easton

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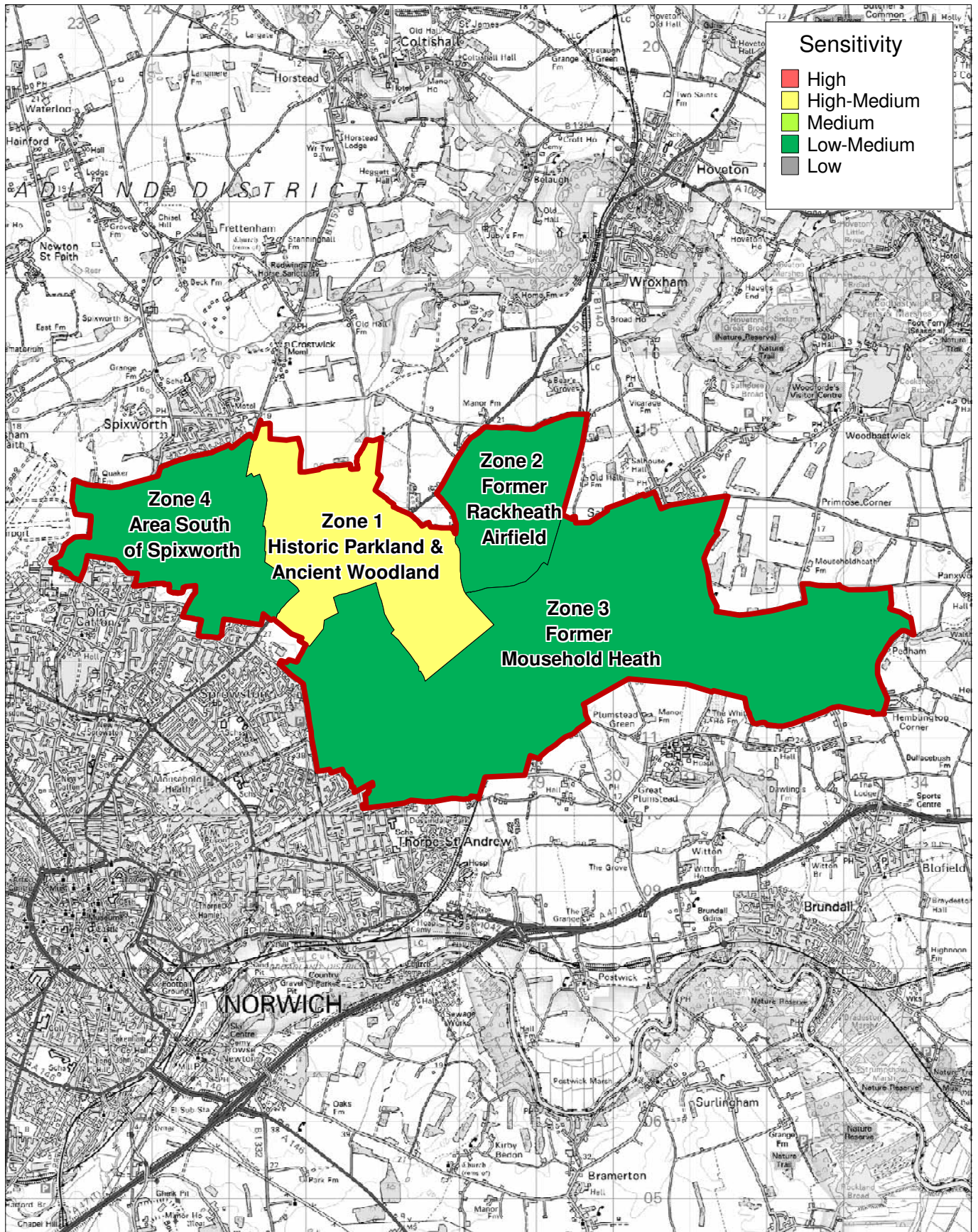


# Figure 5. Sensitivity Zones

Study Area 4: North-East Norwich

Compiled by Alice Cattermole & Heather Hamilton on 26 May 2009

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Norfolk County Council May 2009