

Examination Library Document Reference - C5

North Norfolk District Council

# Background Paper 5

## Green Infrastructure

A non-technical guide explaining the approach to Green Infrastructure and further guiding principles to inform planning proposals and the site allocations in the emerging North Norfolk Local Plan 2016-2036.

Published to support Regulation 18 First Draft Local Plan (Part 1) consultation.  
**May 2019**

<b>Background Paper No 5</b>	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>
National Legislation and Guidance	National Planning Policy Framework (2019) National Planning Policy Guidance
Related Evidence	The Norfolk Green Infrastructure Mapping Project (2018) Recreational Impacts Study (2017) Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Report (2010) and Mapping (2018) North Norfolk State of the Environment Report (2011)

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# Green Infrastructure Background Paper

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## Purpose.

This is one of a number of background papers which have been prepared to help explain and justify various aspects of the new draft Local Plan that is being prepared by North Norfolk District Council. It relates mainly to Policy ENV5 of the consultation draft of the plan, which sets out the approach to Green Infrastructure and further guiding principles to inform the site allocations in Cromer, Fakenham and North Walsham.

The background papers include:

- Paper 1 - Approach to setting the Housing Target
- Paper 2 - Distribution of Growth
- Paper 3 - Approach to Employment
- Paper 4 - Infrastructure Background Paper
- Paper 5 - Green Infrastructure Background Paper (this Paper)
- Paper 6 - Development Sites Selection Methodology
- Paper 7 - Housing Construction Standards

It is not the purpose of this document to repeat all of the evidence that the Council has relied upon when preparing the Draft Plan. This evidence has been separately published and is available on the Council's web site: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-policy/document-library/>. However, where appropriate this document refers to the source of evidence and provides a brief summary or explanation of how the evidence has been considered. Similarly, options which are referred to in the text are explained further in the **North Norfolk Local Plan 2016-2036 Alternative Options** considered and the associated **Sustainability Appraisal** report.

The Council is not seeking comments specifically on this background paper although you may wish to refer to it in making any comments on the Draft Local Plan. Please use the standard response form which has been provided to make comments on the Local Plan.

This document will be informed by the emerging county-wide Norfolk Green Infrastructure Strategy, and other emerging studies, and the final production and adoption of the document will align with the Local Plan process.

### **When using the document, the following should be noted:**

- The nature of the document is to provide an interim 'Background Paper' on strategic approach to providing and improving green infrastructure in the District over time. It is not intended to set out a detailed account of all the issues and differences across the District.
- The list of recommended projects to improve green infrastructure is based on the interim findings of the strategy and the detail contained in the wider evidence base.
- The project list and Action Plan provides guidance about projects that could be considered, however, this list is not exhaustive. Local issues that may not have been included within the evidence base may justify their inclusion within this list as issues and demands change over time. This list is intended to be a 'live' document that will be updated as appropriate to reflect the needs and demands for green infrastructure in the community.

# North Norfolk Green Infrastructure

## Introduction

This document outlines the approach to green infrastructure in North Norfolk in order to inform the First Draft Local Plan policies including the site allocations for Cromer, Fakenham and North Walsham.

## Development of the North Norfolk Green Infrastructure Strategy

A number of other studies are currently underway including a Norfolk-wide Green Infrastructure and Recreation Avoidance Strategy and a specific open space and sports pitch study for North Norfolk. Ultimately, the North Norfolk Green Infrastructure Strategy will take account of the output of these studies and, in particular, of the further detail on the recreational impacts on the sensitive sites and the Strategy will suggest where green infrastructure can be enhanced or provided in order to mitigate the impact. This approach will consider providing alternative locations for recreation as part of a strategic approach across Norfolk of effective mitigation.

A key part of the Background Paper is the initial focused work that has sought to identify green infrastructure opportunities in the 3 Major Growth Towns of Cromer, Fakenham and North Walsham, given the proposed growth in these locations.

Green infrastructure opportunities for the 3 towns are detailed in this document and includes information on habitats, green spaces and access. Furthermore, there is information relating to potential green infrastructure projects and how specific green infrastructure principles should be incorporated into proposed site allocations. It is expected that the County-wide green infrastructure strategy, RAMS study and Open Space Study will also provide further information to inform the proposals and opportunities for the three growth towns and will, in turn, provide bespoke green infrastructure Strategies for the towns.

This Background Paper provides a high level outline of green infrastructure and environmental considerations in North Norfolk. The final published Green Infrastructure Strategy will provide the detail on the district wide approach – highlighting the district wide corridors and how green infrastructure in the district can be enhanced and where new green infrastructure should be provided.

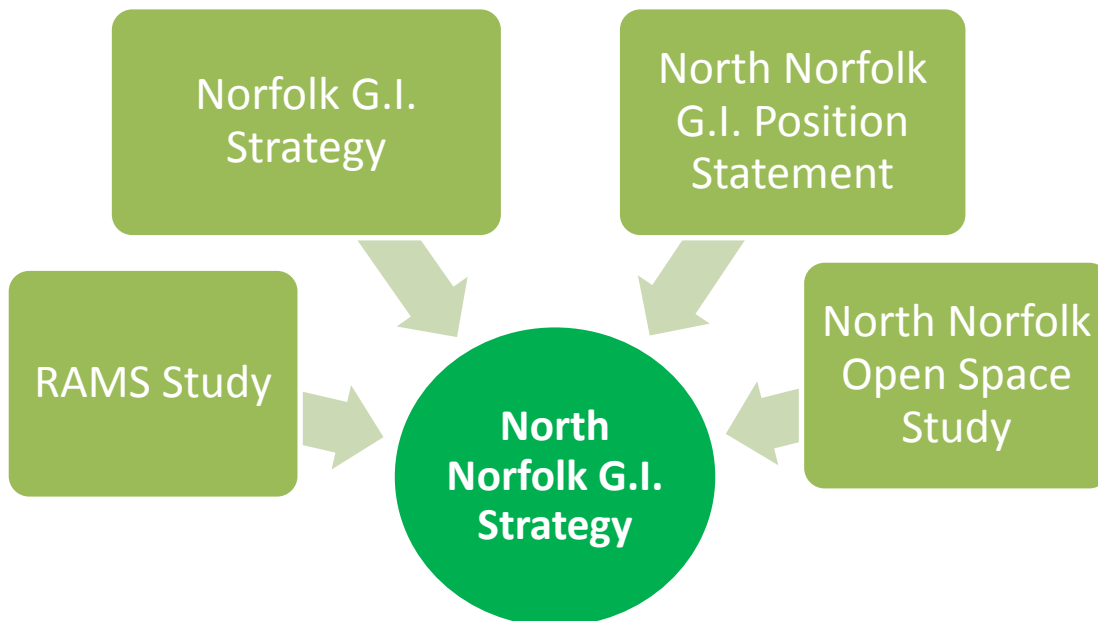


Figure 1: Green Infrastructure Strategy Development Process

## Evidence base

The green infrastructure Background Paper brings together key findings detailed in the Council's evidence base. This evidence has been used to identify existing issues and opportunities in relation to green infrastructure in North Norfolk.

Ultimately, the county-wide green infrastructure strategy will form a significant element of the evidence base and although it will consider matters of a county scale, it is expected, that the work can be distilled into District wide principles.

### Key documents in the Council's evidence base include:

- The Norfolk Green Infrastructure Mapping Project 2018
- North Norfolk State of the Environment Report 2011
- North Norfolk Ecological Network Mapping
- Recreational Impacts Study 2017
- Norfolk Coast Partnership AONB Management Plan and other documents
- Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Report 2010 and Mapping 2018
- North Norfolk Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy (emerging)
- Norfolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2018-2028
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Natural Flood Management Opportunities mapping
- Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan

## Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework: Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy

Core to the vision of the Norfolk authorities is the shared objective of improving the quality of life for all the population of Norfolk and to improve and conserve Norfolk's rich and biodiverse environment. Working collectively through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) the Norfolk Authorities have agreed to produce a Green Infrastructure (green infrastructure) Strategy for Norfolk which will aid the authorities through their Local Plans in protecting and where appropriate, enhancing the relevant assets.

The NSPF has commissioned consultants to undertake the work to produce:

- a green infrastructure strategy for Norfolk – exploring current capacities, types and new strategic opportunities to support the growing population.
- to design a mitigation and monitoring strategy for recreational impacts on those sensitive sites.

These two elements are clearly interrelated. An appropriate green infrastructure strategy for the county making new opportunities to growth will likely reduce immediate pressures on the Natura 2000 sites.

Each Local Authority except Norwich City Council, the Broads Authority and South Norfolk Council currently has in place various individual mitigation measures around the avoidance of recreational pressures. Some also have localised green infrastructure strategies. These have been established as appropriate local / District mitigation strategies. It is however considered that a Norfolk wide strategic approach will provide the optimal solution to ensure that identified recreational impacts on sensitive sites are effectively mitigated. There needs to a strategic approach across Norfolk to effective mitigation for recreational impacts.

## Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)

The production of a Green Infrastructure Asset Map (through the Green Infrastructure Mapping Project) allowed an initial assessment of any potential green infrastructure deficiency across the district. In order to do this, all the urban areas within the district were assessed against the Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) guidelines and also the Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard. This allowed the production of maps that indicate urban areas and settlements that appear to be deficient in green infrastructure and could be targeted for work as part of any green infrastructure planning.

There are a number of settlements that are deficient in the *local* ANGSt and don't have access to any natural greenspaces within 5km. These are generally located in 2 clusters. There is a Corpusty to Walsingham cluster that includes all the settlements in between – including Melton Constable and Briston. The second large cluster is those villages between Scottow and Antingham. Recommendations for Green Spaces in the green infrastructure Strategy will be developed in line with the emerging Open Space Study<sup>1</sup> that will be published later in 2019.

## Overview of Designated Sites

There are a significant number of Internationally Designated Sites in North Norfolk, together with a number of nationally designates sites. Designated sites are those areas which are particularly important for their features, flora or fauna. Some are designated under the terms of international or European agreements such as the Ramsar convention and the EC Habitats Directive. Others are protected by national law such as SSSI and National Nature Reserves. All are specially managed to protect and preserve those features for which they are particularly valued. Many of them are open to the public and bring in large amounts of income to the local economy through tourism.

### Internationally Designated Sites

Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance and are designated under the Ramsar Convention. They are very important habitats for birds and are therefore also designated as Special Protection Areas. There are two Ramsar sites that each partially fall in North Norfolk – Broadland and the North Norfolk Coast - covering a total of 6,864ha of North Norfolk District.

### European Designated Sites

**Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** are sites that are strictly protected under the EC Habitats Directive. Forming part of a European network (Natura 2000) these high quality sites make a significant contribution to conserving those habitats and species considered most in need of protection at a European level. There are eight SACs either within or intersecting with North Norfolk, and they cover around 6,880ha (approximately 7%) of North Norfolk district.

**Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** form the other part of the Natura 2000 network and are designated due to their importance for birds, in accordance with the EC Birds Directive. There are three SPAs in North Norfolk, covering 6,800ha.

### Nationally Designated Sites

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)** are designated sites for wildlife and geology. They have statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the CROW Act 2000 and the NERC Act 2006. Many SSSIs are also international or European designated sites (Ramsar, SPA, SAC), National Nature Reserves or Local Nature Reserves. Natural England is responsible for identifying and designating England's SSSIs. North Norfolk District contains 44 SSSIs covering an area of 8,114ha (just over 8% of the district). 4,548ha of this area is the North Norfolk Coast SSSI.

**National Nature Reserves (NNRs)** are all SSSIs. In addition to managing rare and significant habitats, species and geology the majority of reserves are accessible and offer opportunities for people to get close to nature. There are 12 NNRs within or intersecting with North Norfolk covering a total area of 5,491ha.

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<sup>1</sup> To be completed summer 2019

# District Wide Green Infrastructure

## North Norfolk context

In North Norfolk, the green infrastructure network has evolved over time in a number of different ways. The countryside and coastline has been influenced by natural forces and man-made interventions. The open countryside is a managed mosaic of fields and hedgerows reflecting the historical character of the area while areas of woodland can be remnants of once larger wooded areas or places where recent planting has taken place.

The coastline, cliffs and beaches form an important part of the natural green space for north Norfolk and whilst the coastal area plays a major role in creating North Norfolk's distinctive environment and is important for recreation and to the economy through tourism, it also presents significant challenges. The first emanates from the fact that North Norfolk's cliff coastline has been eroding since the last Ice Age. The second concerns the low-lying coastline either side of the cliffs, which is at risk from tidal flooding.

The east of North Norfolk provides a gateway to the Norfolk Broads, a unique area of internationally recognised wetlands. The North Norfolk Broads are part of the Broads Authority area and, as such, are administered by them as a National Park area. The green infrastructure Strategy will consider linkages and corridors to the Broads – but will not recommend projects within the Broads Authority area.

North Norfolk has 73 km (45 miles) of North Sea coastline between Holkham in the west and Horsey in the south-east. A large proportion of this coast is very attractive and is nationally recognised in the designation of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the North Norfolk Heritage Coast<sup>2</sup>. North Norfolk is also important for its biodiversity and areas of nature conservation interest. In particular, the north coast stretching from Weybourne in the east, westwards along to the boundary with the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk in the west is of international importance for wildlife habitats.

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<sup>2</sup> Heritage coasts are 'defined' rather than designated (unlike the statutory designation process like that associated with national parks and AONB). They were established to conserve the best stretches of undeveloped coast in England.



## North Norfolk Green Infrastructure Vision

The following are the interim overarching strategic objectives for the delivery of green infrastructure in North Norfolk.

- ❖ **Green Infrastructure in North Norfolk will be a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.**
- ❖ **The Green Infrastructure network will be protected and enhanced taking into account the unique characteristics of North Norfolk.**
- ❖ **Habitats will be created, connected and enhanced with particular focus on the sensitive and protected habitats.**
- ❖ **Green Infrastructure provision will take into account visitor pressures and the recreational impact of visitors on sensitive sites.**
- ❖ **Development Proposals will deliver benefits to the Green Infrastructure network including the provision of new green infrastructure.**
- ❖ **New green spaces and open spaces will be created as part of the network of green infrastructure taking into account the principles of the Open Space Study.**
- ❖ **The Trail network, public rights of way and access routes will be protected and enhanced including the provision of new routes and links, particularly in the west of the district, which is poorly served by access routes.**
- ❖ **Rights of way and access routes will be provided through attractive green corridors. Access routes will be available for walkers and cyclists and those with mobility challenges.**

## Development in North Norfolk

The North Norfolk Local Plan 2016-2036 will provide the land use policy framework for the delivery of development across the district up to 2036. The Plan provides the overall strategic approach to development in the District including how much development is likely to be required and where, the approach to job creation, and strategic policies relating to subjects such as retail, tourism and leisure and commercial developments and the infrastructure which will be required to support growth.

### Providing enough homes

Between 2016 and 2036 the population of North Norfolk is forecast to grow by over 10,000 people. This represents a 9% increase and to accommodate this increase in population and to address the changing needs of those who already live here a further 10,500 – 11,000 new homes will need to be provided at an average rate of approximately 550 per annum.

### Development Sites

The Draft Local Plan provides details of all of the sites which the Council intends to specifically allocate for new development. The plan identifies proposed development sites in the larger communities in North Norfolk including North Walsham, Fakenham, Cromer, Holt, Sheringham, Wells next- the- Sea, Stalham, Hoveton, Briston, Ludham, Blakeney and Mundesley. North Walsham, Fakenham, Cromer are identified as ‘Large Growth Towns’ in the Draft Local Plan and will deliver the majority of the new allocations over the Plan period.

These sites will deliver around 50% of the required growth in the district including new housing sites, employment developments, retail and other identified needs. The remainder of the required development over the plan period will either already have planning permission or the Council expects it to be provided as windfall development in locations which comply with the policies of this plan.

## The approach to Green Infrastructure in the ‘Large Growth Towns’

The Large Growth Towns are centres of population and have the broadest range of day-to-day services including ‘higher order’ services. These towns have primary, secondary and higher education, health care, an extensive choice of convenience and comparison goods shopping, good public transport and extensive local employment opportunities. They perform a strong role as service centres and employment providers across a wide area.

Cromer, Fakenham and North Walsham are defined as Large Growth Towns where the majority of new commercial, residential and other types of development will take place. This Background Paper provides further detail on Green Infrastructure opportunities in these 3 towns.

### Managing the potential impacts of climate change

It is widely accepted that increasing emissions of greenhouse gases from human activity has contributed substantially to the climate change experienced across the globe in the past 100 years. It is expected that our climate will continue to change and consequently, North Norfolk (along with the rest of the country will experience hotter and drier summers, milder and wetter winters, flooding and more extreme climate events. In addition, some areas will suffer increasing risk of coastal flooding and erosion due to rising sea levels. Climate change will create both opportunities and threats. For example, warmer summers may lead to water shortages but also an increased demand for leisure and tourism-related facilities and services and new challenges for agricultural production; whilst wetter winters will increase pressure on drainage systems. Climate change, sea level rise and coastal erosion will also have impacts on biodiversity and coastal geology and measures need to be taken to enable wildlife to adapt to future changes. The challenge for the Local Plan is to devise ways to ensure that the carbon footprint of existing and new development is reduced and to build new developments in a way that adapts to inevitable changes to the climate.

## National and Local Policy

### National Planning Policy

The national policy approach to delivering green infrastructure is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and supporting Planning Practice Guidance which was updated in February 2019.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework: Strategic Policies**

Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for...conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure...

Paragraph: 020

#### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

What is a strategic approach to green infrastructure?

To assist in planning positively for green infrastructure local planning authorities may wish to prepare an authority-wide green infrastructure framework or strategy. This should be evidence-based by, for example, including an assessment of current green infrastructure provision that identifies gaps in the network and the components and opportunities for improvement. The assessment can inform the role of green infrastructure in local and neighbourhood plans, infrastructure delivery plans and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) schedules.

Local Plans should identify the strategic location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks. Where appropriate, supplementary planning documents can set out how the planning, design and management components of the green infrastructure strategy for the area will be delivered.

Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 8-029-20160211

### The First Draft Local Plan (Part1) 2019

The Draft Local Plan provides the overarching strategic approach to development and outlines where development should take place, how it should be delivered (through suitable development policies), and to identify appropriate development sites to meet the District's needs. The Plan ensures that good quality, sustainable development takes place in suitable locations which respects the landscape, environment and heritage of North Norfolk.

The Local Plan sets out policies to conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment, promote healthy communities and meet the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change. The First Draft Local Plan (Part1) includes proposed policies on the following:

- **Policy ENV 1: Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty & The Broads National Park:** The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate protection is given to the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Broads National Park.
- **Policy ENV 2: Protection and Enhancement of Landscape & Settlement Character:** The purpose of this policy is to protect the distinctive landscape character, qualities and sensitivities of the area. It applies to all landscapes, not just those which are subject to specific designations.
- **Policy ENV 3: Heritage and Undeveloped Coast:** The purpose of this policy is to protect the appearance and character of the coast.
- **Policy ENV 4: Biodiversity & Geology:** The purpose of this policy is to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.

- **Policy ENV 6: Trees & Hedgerows:** The purpose of this policy is to protect trees, hedgerows and other natural features from harm, including loss and deterioration and to provide compensatory replacement provision where necessary.
- **Policy ENV 7: Open Space & Local Green Spaces:** The purpose of this policy is to protect, enhance and provide open spaces of various types.
- **Policy ENV 8: Public Rights of Way & Access:** The purpose of this policy is to protect, enhance and promote Public Rights of Way and access and to ensure that the creation and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route around the English coast is not hindered.

As part of the comprehensive suite of environmental policies, the First Draft Local Plan contains a specific proposed policy on Green Infrastructure in order to safeguard, retain and enhance the network of green infrastructure.

The proposed policy approach for Green Infrastructure is detailed below.

### Policy ENV 5

#### Green Infrastructure

All development will fully incorporate green infrastructure principles into proposals, including the enhancements and opportunities identified in the Green Infrastructure Background Paper, and will provide a detailed scheme for:

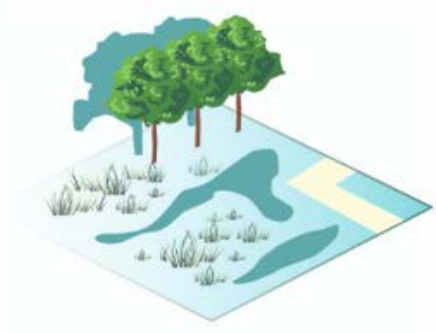
1. the provision and delivery of new green infrastructure, and;
2. the mitigation and enhancement of existing green infrastructure, and;
3. improving green infrastructure connectivity.

Where it can be clearly demonstrated that green infrastructure cannot be delivered on site then contributions will be required to deliver enhancements and mitigation to existing green infrastructure close to the site.

# Cromer

## Green Infrastructure Opportunities

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## Cromer Green Infrastructure Opportunities



Figure 2: North Lodge Park

Cromer functions as the administrative town for the district, is a gateway to the Norfolk coast and, as located on the principle road network and railway line to Norwich, acts as a transport hub. It is one of a cluster of three towns, together with Holt and Sheringham which are identified as performing complimentary functions. The town hosts the District Hospital and provides shopping facilities for the surrounding central part of the District. Cromer is a characterful and attractive seaside town attracting many visitors as a tourist resort. Cromer's landscape setting is particularly sensitive with most of the town surrounded by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This section considers green infrastructure opportunities in the town and in parts of the surrounding parishes.

### Development in Cromer

Cromer has significant environmental constraints which surround the town and limited potential to accommodate growth without expanding into the surrounding countryside. To the north is the North Sea while most of the surrounding landscape falls within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A balance needs to be struck between providing both residential and economic development with that of protecting the landscape setting of the town, its character and its role as a tourist destination. Development proposals for Cromer are mainly located on the edge of town and also fall in the surrounding parishes of Runton, Felbrigg, Roughon, Northrepps and Overstrand. Land allocations in Cromer seek to deliver 600 homes and are outlined below. Specific green infrastructure opportunities for each site will be detailed in the 'Opportunities for Cromer' and the Action Plan.

**Land at Runton Road / Clifton Park (C10/1)** is considered suitable to be allocated for residential development of up to 90 dwellings and a primary school site.

**Former Golf Practice Ground, Overstrand Road (C16)** is considered suitable to be allocated for residential development of up to 180 dwellings. This site is in the AONB.

**Land West of Pine Tree Farm (C22/1)** is considered suitable to be allocated for residential development for up to 300 dwellings and sport pitches. This is the largest proposed development site in Cromer and is in the AONB.

**Land at Cromer High Station (C07/1)** is considered suitable to be allocated for up to 22 dwellings and is a small parcel of former railway land.

## Landscape Character

Cromer is surrounded to the east, south and south west by the Norfolk Coast AONB. In the Landscape Character Assessment<sup>3</sup> most of Cromer is classified as ‘Coastal Shelf’. The Coastal Shelf type is characterised by a coastal strip of land, around 12 miles in length yet only 1-mile-deep, which incorporates some of the District’s principal settlements, sandwiched between the Cromer Ridge and the sea. Settlement is nestled within pockets of arable farmland and woodland, some of which are markedly rural and unspoilt. The outer edges of Cromer are categorised as ‘Tributary Farmland’ to the south and is characterised by generally open and rolling/undulating rural farmland with some elevated plateau areas and a rich diversity of minor settlement, woodland and historic estates.

‘Woodland Glacial Cromer Ridge’ landscape type relates to a terminal glacial moraine, the Cromer Ridge, that forms a dramatic, distinctive and influential landscape feature, characterised by a steep, north-facing wooded scarp slope and more gently sloping, largely arable southern side. The Wooded Glacial Ridge has a significant influence on the visual character of adjacent landscapes both to the north and south.

### Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

The following information is drawn from the 2018 landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and is a summary of the landscape strategy and guidelines in the LCA and should be read with the document as a whole. The LCA will inform how green infrastructure is delivered in respect of how green infrastructure proposals can contribute to the landscape character.

<b>Landscape Characteristics and Strategy: Cromer</b>
<p><b>Coastal Shelf</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance landscape integration of prominent coastal development.</li> <li>• Conserve the valuable undeveloped areas between coastal settlements, to maintain a clear sense of leaving one settlement before arriving at the next.</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the individual character of settlements.</li> <li>• Retain the character of the skyline.</li> <li>• Enhance public rights of way.</li> <li>• Manage the impacts of climate change and coastal erosion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tributary Farmland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve sense of rurality.</li> <li>• Conserve the nucleated character of villages.</li> <li>• Protect and appropriately manage the rich cultural heritage of the area.</li> <li>• Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats.</li> <li>• Manage the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>• Manage activities such as mineral extraction.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Woodland Glacial Ridge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve the wooded character, skyline, sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies by avoiding prominent development.</li> <li>• Enhance the diversity, integrity and resilience of native woodlands and conserve, restore and expand other semi-natural habitats including lowland heathland.</li> <li>• Protect and appropriately manage the rich cultural heritage of the area.</li> <li>• Manage the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>• Manage activities such as mineral extraction.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment. Prepared by LUC for North Norfolk District Council. November 2018

## Green Spaces in Cromer

Cromer appears reasonably well served<sup>4</sup> with green and open spaces in and around the town. The town centre has North Lodge Park, the Runtun Road Gardens and Evington Lawns open space. At the

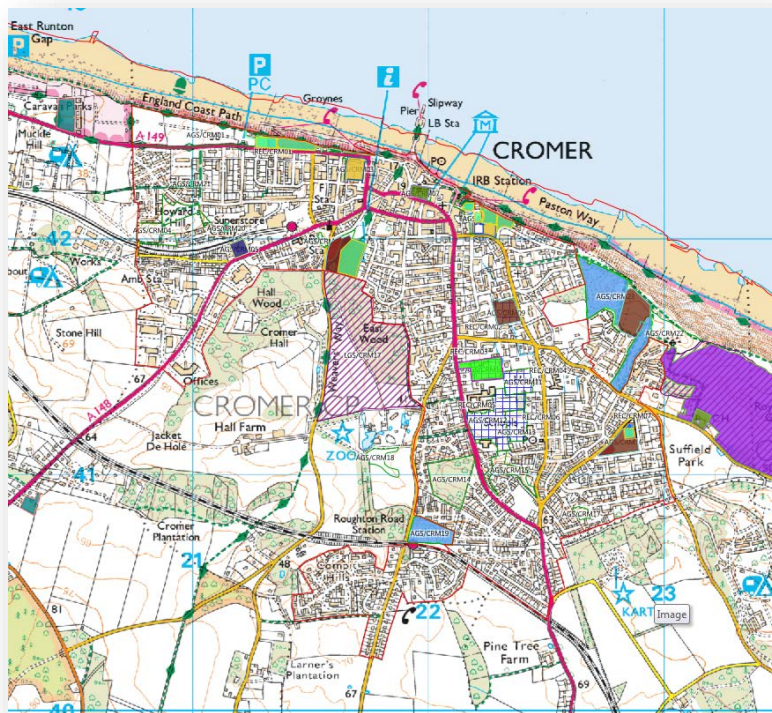


Figure 3: Overview Map of green spaces in Cromer

the south side of the town centre is the Meadow Park which is the largest public open space in the town centre. To the east of the town is a large semi-natural greenspace that is formed of Warren Woods, Happy Valley and Links Woods.

There are proposals to improve the recreational and play offer at North Lodge Park to turn disused pitch and put areas into inclusive play spaces.

The only other park area outside the town centre is Fearn's Park which is in the Suffield Park area of town.

There are other publically accessible semi-natural green spaces on the edge of Cromer such as Howards Hill, Burnt Hills Wood and Browns Hill Wood, together with Woodland Trust site 'Dick Buck's Burrows' which is just over the Cromer/Felbrigg boundary.

There are other large areas of green spaces in the town in the form of the football club, tennis club and cricket club – as well the playing fields and sports pitches associated with the schools. However, some of the formal sports pitches in the town could be considered at the threat of development as they are potentially attractive development plots within the settlement boundary.

Cromer is a coastal town with access to a sandy beach and coastal access along the cliffs. The coast path passes through the largest open space (but not publicly accessible) in the area – The Royal Cromer Golf Course.

The ANGSt<sup>5</sup> standards, recommended by Natural England, finds that Cromer does not meet all the access standards and is deficient in providing access to the large 500ha regional facility (the nearest 'site' being the coastal marshes between Weybourne and Wells). However, the town is only just outside (by 1km) the 10km accessibility standard and this deficiency can be mitigated by the availability of access to the coast and beach.

<sup>4</sup> Desktop assessment – not, at this stage, reflecting the output of a comprehensive open space study.

<sup>5</sup> Taken from the Green Infrastructure Mapping Project 2018



## Core Habitats in Cromer

This Background paper considers the information taken from the Green Infrastructure Mapping Project on 'Core Habitats' for Cromer which are: Wetland, Grassland & Heathland and Woodland. The broad G.I. Corridor and the overlain habitat mapping can be seen at Appendix 1.

### Designated Sites

The cliff area running from Happy Valley to the west through to Overstrand is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a SSSI.

Overstrand Cliffs are one of the best examples of unprotected vegetated soft cliffs on the North Sea coast in the most easterly part of the UK. The cliffs are up to 70 m high and are composed of Pleistocene sands and clays with freshwater seepages in places and are subject to moderately frequent cliff-falls and landslips. Much of the length is unprotected by sea defences and is therefore natural in character. The vegetation exhibits cycles of succession with ruderal communities developing on the newly-exposed sands and mud followed by partially-stabilised grasslands and scrub. Seepage areas support wet fen communities and in places perched reedbeds occur. The diverse range of habitats supports an outstanding range of invertebrates.

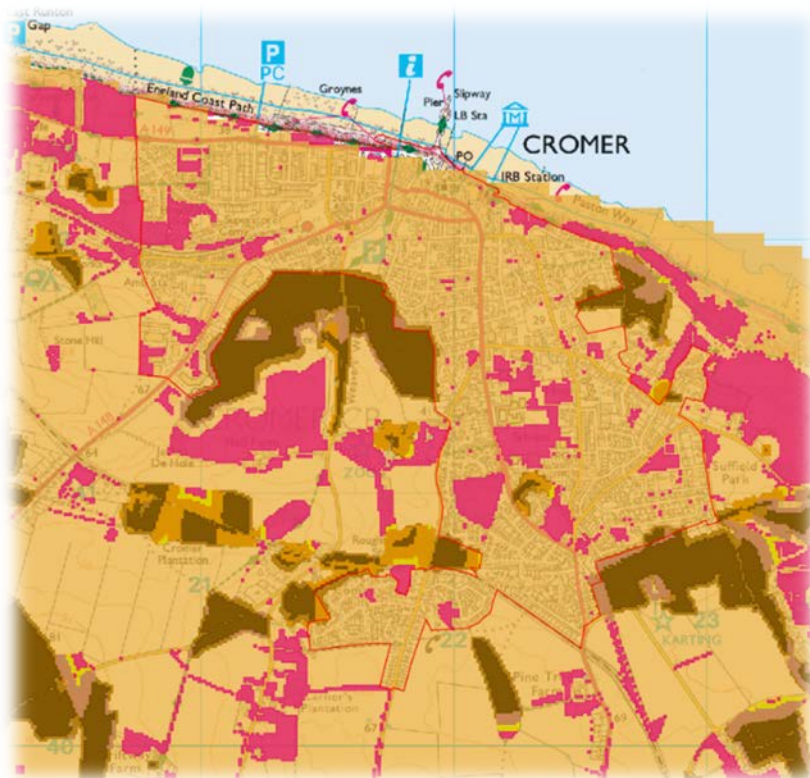
### Joint Nature Conservation Committee

### Wetland

The wetland environment in Cromer is the coast, cliffs and sea. The Cromer coast is set high on cliffs with a pebbles and sand beach. There are no significant water courses or wetland habitats in Cromer or the immediate surrounding area. The most significant coastal habitat is the Overstrand Cliffs SSSI & SAC.

## Woodland

There are a number of large areas of woodland in and around Cromer including the wooded environment around Cromer Hall, Warren Woods & Links Wood, Brown's Hill, Gurney's Wood and Oak Hill Wood and just out of town are Cottage Wood (Forest Park Caravan Site), Dick Buck's Burrows and Cromer & Becketts's plantations. There are smaller pockets of woodland in the town at Furze Hill, an osier carr to the east of Cromer Academy, Howards Hill and a number of mature trees in the Overstrand Road area of town.



The woodland opportunity mapping (fig. 4) shows the areas of the existing woodland network in dark brown, the broad woodland opportunity corridor in light brown and the focussed opportunity locations in pink.

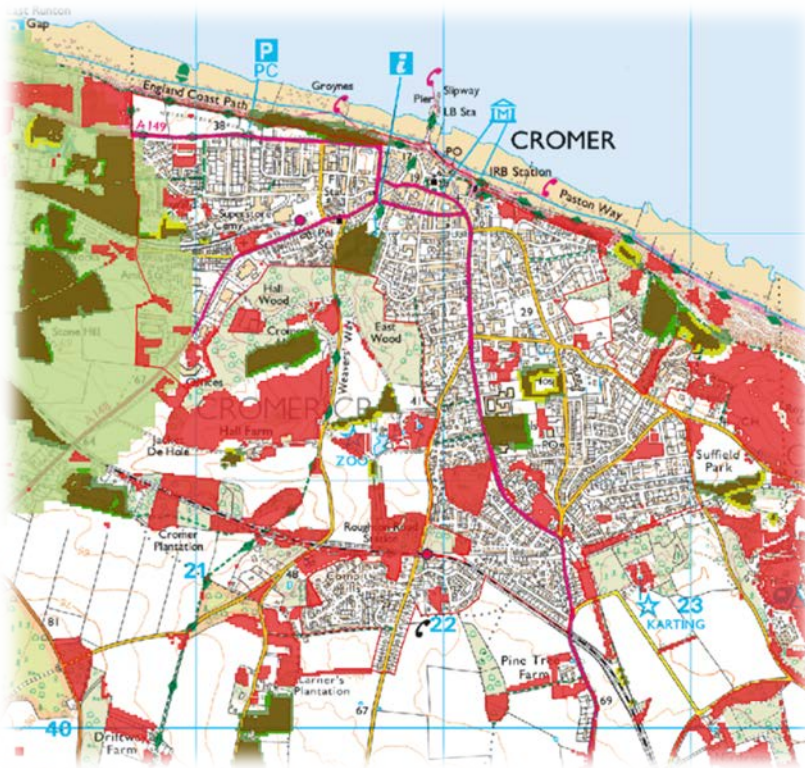
Figure 4: Woodland habitats and opportunities in Cromer

### Woodland Recommendations:

- Manage and enhance the health and structure of existing woodlands to improve resilience.
- Support and re-introducing of traditional management practices where appropriate, such as coppicing;
- Replant ageing or diseased specimens (with climate and disease hardy species if possible) to ensure the future survival of these features.
- Retain and manage areas of woodland and trees, including those that contribute to the setting of the town.
- Promote the creation of new native woodland in general, and particularly in conjunction with new development as a means of screening built form.
- New planting associated with development should blend with existing features rather than simply trying to screen new development - layers of vegetation may be more appropriate than one thick screen using species local to the area.
- Reinstate hedges where these have been lost.
- Enlarge areas woodland with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.
- Support the sensitive replacement of conifers with native tree species.

## Grassland and Heathland

There are small pockets of grassland and heathland in and around Cromer. There are some areas of grassland that are part of the Cromer Hall estate and areas of heath at Happy Valley and at Cottage Wood. There is a large grassland and heathland corridor to the west of Cromer including the campsites at Stone Hill/Roundabout Hill covering the areas across to Inleborough Hill and beyond.



The grassland and heathland opportunity mapping (fig. 5) shows the existing grassland and heathland in dark green, the broad grassland and heath opportunity corridor in light green and the focussed opportunity locations in red.

Figure 5: Grassland and Heathland habitats and opportunities in Cromer

## Grassland and Heathland Recommendations

- Support the management and restoration of heathland. Where heathland restoration takes place on woodland, consider the scope for compensatory woodland planting on surrounding land to maintain wooded character. Robustly manage invasive species.
- Seek to improve habitat connectivity between isolated areas of undeveloped land
- Reinstate grassland and heathland where these have been lost.
- Enlarge areas of pasture, heathland and arable margins, with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.

## Public Access Network in Cromer

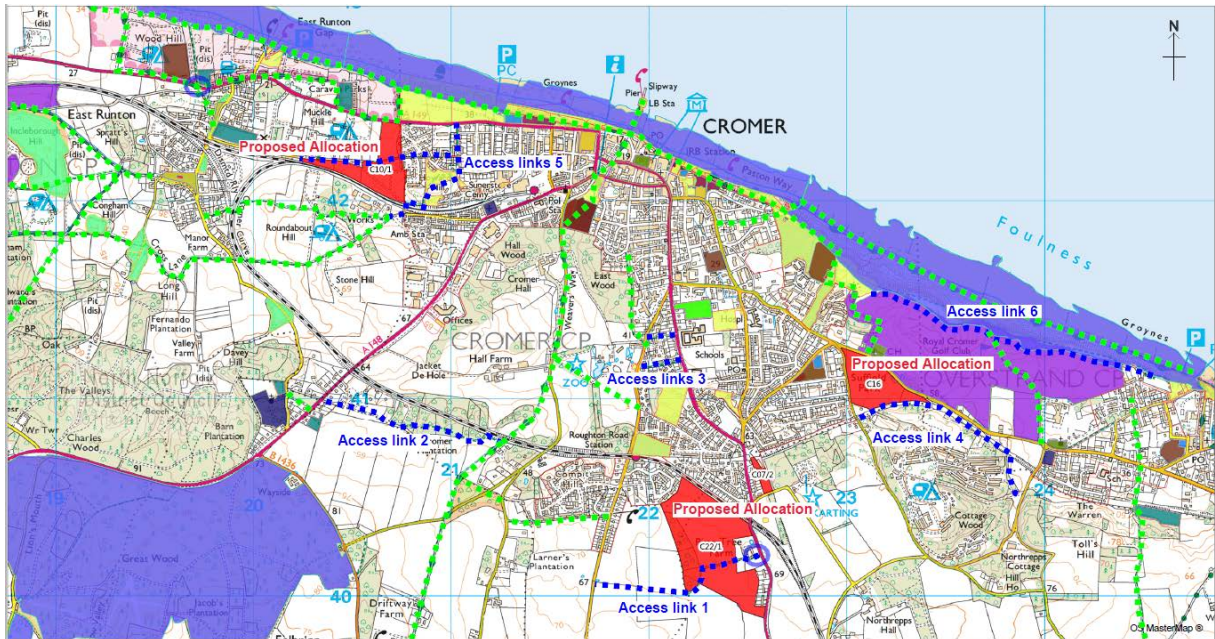


Figure 6: Access routes and opportunities in Cromer

### Public Rights of Way

The England Coast Path passes through Cromer following the cliff top paths and along the esplanade, whilst the section towards Overstrand continues along the beach.

The Weavers Way runs from Cromer Pier, south past Cromer Hall and onwards towards Felbrigg Hall. The majority of the route, through the town and on the outskirts, is along pavements.

The south east of the town is poorly served by rights of way routes and there is a general lack of east–west rights of way or access connections. Like the highway connections – people have to go into the town centre and out again to provide the countryside connections.

From the west of town at Sandy Lane there is good connectivity which offers routes to the Runtons via an extensive network between Easton Runton, Inleborough Hill, Roman Camp and onwards towards West Runton and Beeston Regis.

There are urban east west public footpaths, between Norwich Road and Roughton Road, however, they are relatively narrow, often muddy, unattractive and have not been sympathetically accommodated into the housing development.

A new route through the Norfolk Homes, Roughton Road development, has been sympathetically laid out in a green corridor with a wide surfaced path. This route provides a vital connection between Roughton Road and Hall Road and allows for a pedestrian connection to the Amazonia Zoo and a connection with the Weavers Way.

### Cycle routes

Sustrans Regional Cycle Route Nos 30 & 33 path through the town. Route 33 connects Cromer to Aylsham via Felbrigg Hall and Blickling Hall on quiet rural road.

More detailed public access mapping, including the identification of opportunities, can be found at Appendix 4.

## Overarching Green Infrastructure Opportunities for Cromer

Three 'green infrastructure Action Zones' have been identified for Cromer and surrounding area:

### Coastal corridor

- Enhance access connections to coastal path – particularly to the east, through the golf course, where the path has been lost to cliff fall.
- Protect and enhance the special qualities of the Overstrand Cliffs SAC & SSSI.
- Protect and enhance access and biodiversity in Warren Woods, Happy Valley and Links Woods (NNDC owned sites).
- Strengthen access links to the coast from the existing residential area and the proposed new developments.

### Weavers Way Corridor

- The corridor following the route of the Weavers Way will be enhanced with a focus on improving access connections, landscape and biodiversity improvements.
- Maintain and improve signage and structures.
- An alternative link from the town should be explored utilising FP7 and the new route through the Roughton Road development and past the zoo.
- Improve and create new connections, particularly to strengthen east/west connections.

### Town wide green infrastructure Improvements

- Enhance and create east west public rights of way connections - particularly from the Norwich Road to Roughton Road and from Hall Road to Holt Road.
- Enhance all rights of way within the town and those linking to the countryside.
- Improve signage and waymarking, providing information on how to access the key routes.

These actions zones provide the framework for project considerations as part of the proposed allocations and have further detail in the Action Plan.

## Action Plan for Cromer

Potential Project List and Action Plan				
Action Zone /Project name	Project outline	G.I. Function		
		Green Spaces	Habitats	Access
<b>Coastal corridor</b>				
<b>Coastal Path access</b>	1. Protect and enhance the coastal path and coastal margin.			✓
	2. Ensure a continuous route is available to the public, particularly the section through the golf course with the legal footpath route being lost to erosion. Current cliff top access is provided by permission of the golf course. <b>See 'Access link 6' on Cromer access map</b>	✓		✓
	3. Protect and maintain the 2 stepped access points that provide access from Happy Valley down to the beach in line with the management and conservation of the SAC.	✓	✓	✓
<b>Overstrand Cliffs SAC &amp; SSSI</b>	Protect and enhance the cliffs in line with the designation and/or management plan.  The Coast Path runs along the bottom of the cliffs, there is public access on the cliff top and there are stepped access routes down and through the cliffs. Public access needs to be maintained.		✓	✓
<b>Happy Valley area</b>	1. Maintain and improve access routes through Links Wood and Warren Wood. Particularly to identify opportunities to improve inclusive access through the area linking to the recreation ground, Happy Valley and the coast.	✓	✓	✓

	2. Maintain and improve biodiversity of the sites adjacent to the SAC to preserve the dynamic of the habitat and improve the overall biodiversity of all the habitats on the sites whilst maintaining public access.	✓	✓	✓
<b>Weavers Way Corridor</b>				
	1. An alternative link from the town should be explored utilising FP7 and the new route through the Roughton Road development and past the zoo.			✓
	2. Improve and create new connections, particularly to strengthen east/west connections. <b>See 'Access links 1,2,3 &amp;4' on Cromer access map</b>			✓
	3. Improvements to signage especially on the local connecting routes. Provide map boards and improved interpretation.			✓
	4. Improvements to the biodiversity along the corridor		✓	✓
<b>Town wide green infrastructure Improvements</b>				
<b>Improve connections to the coast path.</b>	1. The routes at Howards Hill and Clifton Park should be enhanced as they provide a connection to the Coast Path and the extensive network to the west of the town. These routes already provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors and this use is likely to increase with the proposed development at Clifton Park. <b>See 'Access link 5' on Cromer access map</b>	✓		✓
<b>Enhance east west access connections</b>	2. Improve urban footpath routes – with a focus on narrow paths that link to the schools. <b>See 'Access links 3' on Cromer access map</b>			✓
	3. Create a formal route that runs along the former railway bed from Northrepps Road through Forest Park. <b>See 'Access link 4' on Cromer access map</b>			✓
	4. Improve FP at Pine Tree Farm including the delivering of the missing link to Roughton Road. <b>See 'Access link 1' on Cromer access map</b>			✓

	5. Improve FP8 at Cromer Plantation including delivery of the missing link to Holt Road. <b>See 'Access link 2' on Cromer access map</b>			✓
	6. Deliver a link through Brown's Hill Wood which should provide an all-weather path between Brownhill and the schools.			✓
<b>Town wide biodiversity improvements</b>	1. Provide biodiversity corridors that link dispersed habitats.		✓	
	2. Ensure new developments consider biodiversity improvements including the retention of existing natural features, the provision of multi-functional SuDS, and sympathetic residential boundary treatments – i.e. hedges rather than walls and close boarded fences.	✓	✓	
<b>Town wide Green Space enhancements</b>	1. Improve the biodiversity on open space sites.	✓	✓	
	2. Introduce 'inclusive access' play equipment to open space sites.	✓		
	3. New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.	✓	✓	✓



## Cromer: green infrastructure Principles to Inform Site Allocations

### **Land at Runton Road / Clifton Park (C10/1)**

This site falls within the Coastal and Town green infrastructure Corridors.

The site is very close to the coast and is across the road from the open space/car park at 'Carnival Field' /Runton Road. The Norfolk Coast path runs along the frontage of the site.

The site is currently used for informal recreation with a number of paths crossing the site including Runton Bridleway No 22. In theory bridleways should be open and available for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Unfortunately, the eastern part of this route have been enclosed in a narrow, fenced in, unattractive path between Clifton Park and the site. To the west of the BR22 is narrow and obstructed by vegetation in places.

There are important east west routes that are being used through the site which connect Cromer with East Runton and north south routes which connect Sandy Lane (at the large campsite at Manor Farm), over the railway to the coast road.

Any development of the site should produce a site specific green infrastructure strategy that addresses the following:

- Provide access connections into the AONB from to the Coast path to the north including safe crossing points of the Coast Road.
- Provide east to west connection that links the site to East Runton (Mill Lane). Which will include enhancing the public right of way through the site and those connections to the site (BR22). BR22 should be improved between the site and Clifton Park and to the west to Mill Lane.
- On site routes should be through attractive green corridors with minimum 2m wide paths.
- An off road 'safe route to school' should be provided to the primary school site (which can be part of one other the other access routes provided).
- Green corridors and open space should be provided to provide an amenity resource and to improve the landscape setting of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees should be maintained where possible.
- The open space, green corridors, landscaping and residential gardens should promote biodiversity and habitat corridors through the site.
- Pockets of greenspaces should be connected by green corridors provide access connections and habitat corridors.
- Signposts and map boards should be provided on the site to inform residents and visitors where the routes and connections are available in the area. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.

### **Former Golf Practice Ground, Overstrand Road (C16)** This site falls within the Coastal and Town green infrastructure Corridors.

This site falls wholly in the AONB. The site was a former golf practice area that has now turned to rough grass and scrub. To the south of the site is the former railway line, which is used as a recreational walk through to Forest Park, and a large area of woodland. To the north of the site is Royal Cromer Golf Course and a public footpath which goes up to the lighthouse and coast path with connections into Happy Valley and into Cromer and Overstrand. To the west of the site is the Suffield Park area of Cromer which has the schools, local shops and other services.

Any development of the site should produce a site specific green infrastructure strategy that addresses the following:

- Provide an access corridor to Northrepps Road and through to Overstrand Road (to link with the public right of way to the north) including a safe crossing point of the Overstrand Road.
- On site routes should be through attractive green corridors with minimum 2m wide paths.
- Green corridors and open space should be provided to provide an amenity resource and to improve the landscape setting of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees should be maintained where possible.
- The open space, green corridors, landscaping and residential gardens should promote biodiversity and habitat corridors through the site.
- Signposts and map boards should be provided on the site to inform residents and visitors where the routes and connections are available in the area. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.

**Land West of Pine Tree Farm (C22/1)** This site falls within the Town green infrastructure Corridor.

This site falls wholly in the AONB. The site consists of mainly two arable fields and a small woodland called Beckett's Plantation. The majority of the site is in the Northrepps parish. Northrepps Footpath 16 passes through the site, however, this is a 'dead-end' path which stops at the Northrepps/Roughton parish boundary.

Any development of the site should produce a site specific green infrastructure strategy that addresses the following:

- Enhancements to FP16 and provision of a new access route to the west of the site to link with Roughton Road.
- On site access routes should be through attractive green corridors with minimum 2m wide paths.
- Provide public access to Beckett's Plantation should be provided together with biodiversity improvements to the woodland.
- Green corridors and open space should be provided to provide an amenity resource and to improve the landscape setting of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees should be maintained where possible.
- The open space, green corridors, landscaping and residential gardens should provide biodiversity and habitat corridors through the site.
- Signposts and map boards should be provided on the site to inform residents and visitors where the routes and connections (i.e. to the Weavers Way) are available in the area. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.

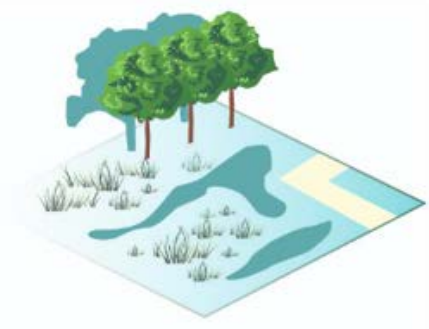
**Land at Cromer High Station (C07/1)** This site falls within the Town green infrastructure Corridor.

This is a small brownfield site on the southern edge of the town. The land is former railway land and would have been the track bed and goods sidings area of the original Cromer station (closed in the 1960's). To the north of the site there are a number of employment/commercial/retail units and to the west of the site are houses. Realistically, there are not a great deal of specific green infrastructure enhancements that can be carried out on the site, however, development of the site should be mindful of strengthening the habitat corridors between the woods to the east and the former railway to the south.

# Fakenham

## Green Infrastructure Opportunities

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# Fakenham Green Infrastructure Opportunities



Figure 7: Former railway line south of Fakenham

Fakenham is located in the west of the district and has a population of 7,720. It is situated on the River Wensum, about 19 miles north east of King's Lynn, 19 miles south west of Cromer, and 25 miles north west of Norwich. Fakenham is around 10 miles from the coast at Wells. Fakenham is one of the most accessible locations in the district in terms of access to the national road network, however, there are no rail connections.

Fakenham has one of the larger town centres in the District which is focussed around the historic core of the Market Place and Corn Exchange. As with the rest of North Norfolk there is significant demand and need for new housing. Growth of the town to the south and west is constrained by the River Wensum, its flood plain and sensitive wetland habitats. This section considers green infrastructure opportunities in the town and in parts of the surrounding parishes.

## Development in Fakenham

Fakenham will see the delivery of 1500 new homes up to 2036 and the new are outlined below. Specific green infrastructure opportunities for each site will be detailed in the 'Opportunities for Fakenham' and the Action Plan.

The majority of the proposed development for Fakenham is located to the north of the town – building up to the A148 bypass.

**Land North of Rudham Stile Lane (F01)** Around 900 dwellings were allocated on the adjacent allocation in the previous Site Allocation DPD.

**Land North of Rudham Stile Lane (F01/B)** is proposed to be allocated for around 560 dwellings in the new Local Plan. The site is proposing to deliver significant amounts of open space (around 20% of the site area).

**Land at Junction of A148 and B1146 (F03)** is proposed to be allocated for approximately 65 dwellings and is on the western edge of the town abutting the by-pass.

**Land South of Barons Close (F10)** is a small site for approximately 40 homes has been proposed to the south of the town on land that includes a significant area of public open space (4.15ha) that provides a buffer between the residential development and the River Wensum.

All proposed development sites in Fakenham are within 2km of the sensitive, designated, sites along the River Wensum.

## Landscape Character

In the Landscape Character Assessment<sup>6</sup> the land to the south and west of Fakenham is characterised as 'Tributary Farmland'. The land to the north and east is 'Rolling Open Farmland' and the final landscape characteristic for Fakenham is the 'River Valley of the River Wensum and tributaries'.

Tributary Farmland is characterised by generally open and rolling/undulating rural farmland with some elevated plateau areas and a rich diversity of minor settlement, woodland and historic estates.

The Rolling Open Farmland Type extends from the coast to the southern edge of the District and is characterised by high level open, gently rolling arable farmland with relatively large, geometric fields enclosed by hedgerows. With the exception of the Holkham estate there is limited woodland cover and relatively few field/hedgerow trees.

The river Wensum is one of the finest examples of a lowland chalk river in the country. The valley floors provide a strong contrast to the typically open, large-scale arable landscapes through which they pass, being characterised by a pastoral land use, a high level of tree cover and a linear settlement pattern, with significant local variations in land cover and, consequently, in views.

### Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

The following information is drawn from the 2018 landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and is a summary of the landscape strategy and guidelines in the LCA and should be read with the document as a whole. The LCA will inform how green infrastructure is delivered in respect of how green infrastructure proposals can contribute to the landscape character.

<b>Landscape Characteristics and Strategy: Fakenham</b>
<b>Tributary Farmland</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve sense of rurality.</li> <li>• Conserve the nucleated character of villages.</li> <li>• Protect and appropriately manage the rich cultural heritage of the area.</li> <li>• Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats.</li> <li>• Manage the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>• Manage activities such as mineral extraction.</li> </ul>
<b>Rolling Open Farmland</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and expand non-arable areas</li> <li>• Conserve openness, tranquillity and rurality.</li> <li>• Conserve the nucleated character of settlements.</li> <li>• Integrate existing/proposed settlement fringe development into surrounding landscape.</li> <li>• Reduce pressure on coastal access/movement.</li> </ul>
<b>River Valley of the River Wensum and tributaries</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the small scale of valley landscapes.</li> <li>• Maintain rural character.</li> <li>• Integrate valley-side development.</li> <li>• Protect high ecological status.</li> <li>• Protect and manage cultural heritage assets.</li> <li>• Strengthen public access.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment. Prepared by LUC for North Norfolk District Council. November 2018

## Green Spaces in Fakenham

Fakenham has a number of small publicly accessible greenspaces within the town together with a number of larger open spaces which are associated with educational or sporting establishments.

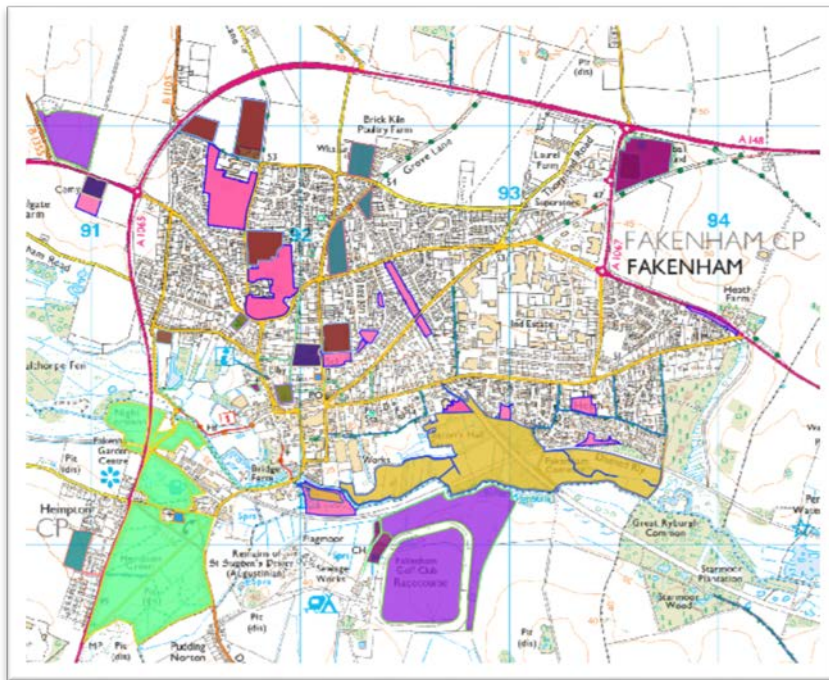


Figure 8: Overview Map of green spaces in Fakenham

To the south of the town on either side of the River Wensum is a golf course and large area of natural greenspace space known as Fakenham Common.

However, there is only one reasonable sized park in Fakenham which is the Queens Road Recreation Ground which has to serve the entire population. The east of the town is poorly served by green spaces and is around 2km from the Queens Road site.

There are some green spaces in the Valley way/Warren Avenue area, however, they appear to be devoid of any facilities – such as play equipment.

The ANGSt standards, recommended by Natural England, finds that Fakenham has overall good access to a range of greenspaces and is only deficient in providing access to a large 500ha greenspace site. However, the residents in the northern part of town do not have the same level of access as those resident's south of the Norwich Road.

To the east of the town is Pensthorpe Waterfowl Park, which is a nature reserve which is open to the public and has a range of facilities including a café and impressive children's play area. However, there is an entry fee for the site and dogs are not allowed on the site. Although the site appears to be within cycling and walking distance of the town - there appears to be no safe access to the site for pedestrians and cyclists without travelling along the A1067 – which does not have a footway or cycleway. The course of the former railway runs from the town into the site and may provide an opportunity to provide a sustainable route to the site.

### Registered Common Land

To the south west of the town are some large areas of common land, namely: Night Common, Hempton Common and Hempton Green. Although these are all located in the adjacent parish of Hempton, they are all accessible to the wider Fakenham residents.

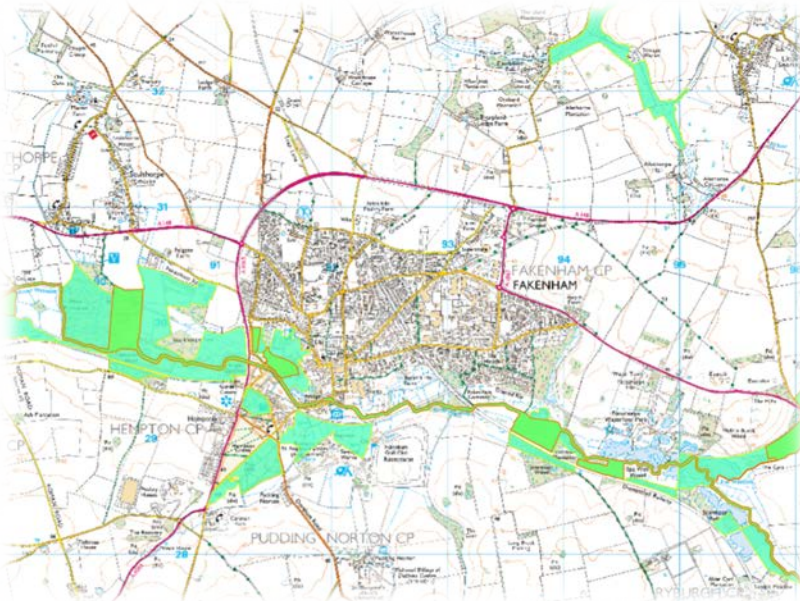
## Habitats and Biodiversity in Fakenham

This Background paper considers the information taken from the Green Infrastructure Mapping Project on 'Core Habitats' for Fakenham which are: Wetland, Grassland & Heathland and Woodland. The broad G.I. corridors and the overlain habitat mapping can be seen at Appendix 2.

### Designated sites in Fakenham

Strategic Policy SS8 for Fakenham in the Core Strategy stated that 'In the Wensum Valley public access will be enhanced where possible through a network of public paths, cycle ways and open spaces linking the Wensum Valley with the centre of Fakenham and other nearby settlements. Any additional access will be achieved with the agreement of relevant landowners and having due regard to ecologically sensitive areas'.

### Special Areas of Conservation



To the south of the town is the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation (also a Site of Special Scientific Interest). This site runs along the river corridor and includes other areas of land such as Great Ryburgh Common and Sculthorpe Moor.

Figure 9: Map of Special Area of Conservation

### County Wildlife Sites

Large areas of land that abut the River Wensum SAC are designated as County Wildlife Sites – such as Night Common, Hempton Common, Sculthorpe Moor & Meadows and the water meadows to the south west of Oak Street.

### Natural England's view on access and dogs

A recent assessment of dog-walking route length within Natura 2000 sites in Norfolk based on visitor interviews, recorded the maximum dog walking route length as 14.9km, the average as 3.3km.

New major development and greenspace sites should offer sufficient dog walking routes and safe off lead dog walking areas of sufficient appeal to keep residents on site and act as mitigation for the additional recreational disturbance to designated sites in the Fakenham and wider Norfolk area.

Natural England recommend that the focus for Fakenham should be on overall ecological protection and ecological enhancements along the River Wensum corridor.

Major development proposals and new large greenspace sites should provide a dog walking route that is an equivalent length to the average (3.3km). In addition, the proposals should include the provision of community information boards identifying suitable alternative walks and less sensitive locations for all users including dog walkers. The provision of street furniture to include litter and dog bins should also be included.

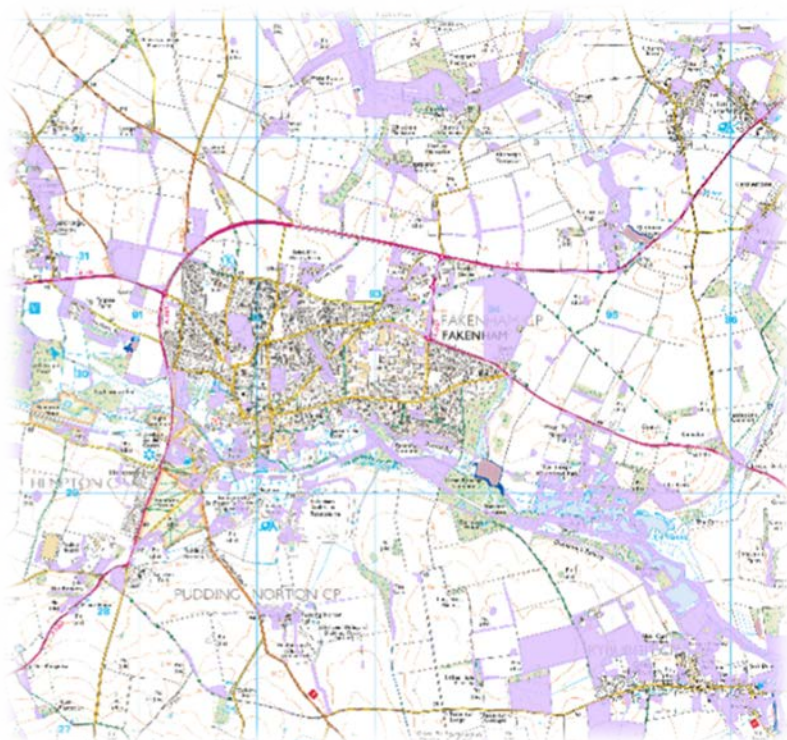
### Core Habitats in Fakenham

Fakenham is generally surrounded by a rural arable landscape with the River Wensum running to the south of the town.

### Wetland

The River Wensum is a core habitat corridor that has national and European designation.

In 1993, 71 km of the Wensum was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation and the river is recognised as one of the most important chalk river habitats in the country with over 100 plant species and a rich invertebrate fauna. In 2001, the River Wensum was designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive. Of the 90.6 ha of 'River and Stream' habitat included in the SSSI, 99.4% is considered to be 'unfavourable and declining' mostly due to sediments, bank poaching and diffuse water pollution. The main river channel currently has 'poor' ecological status (and is also predicted to be 'poor' status in 2015)<sup>7</sup>.



The wetland opportunity mapping (fig. 10) shows the wetland opportunity locations in purple.

Figure 10: Wetland habitats and opportunities in Fakenham

### Wetland Recommendations

- Protect the high ecological status and water quality of the Wensum corridor, extensive stretches of which are nationally designated, recognising that varied habitats which enhance biodiversity likewise enhance landscape interest and character.
- Seek to re-connect fragmented wetland habitats
- Reinststate ponds and watercourses where these have been lost.

<sup>7</sup> Wensum Alliance: <http://www.wensumalliance.org.uk>



## Woodland

The woodland habitats in Fakenham are mainly located to the east and south of the town – following the Wensum river.



The woodland opportunity mapping (fig. 11) shows the areas of the existing woodland network in dark brown, the broad woodland opportunity corridor in light brown and the focussed opportunity locations in pink.

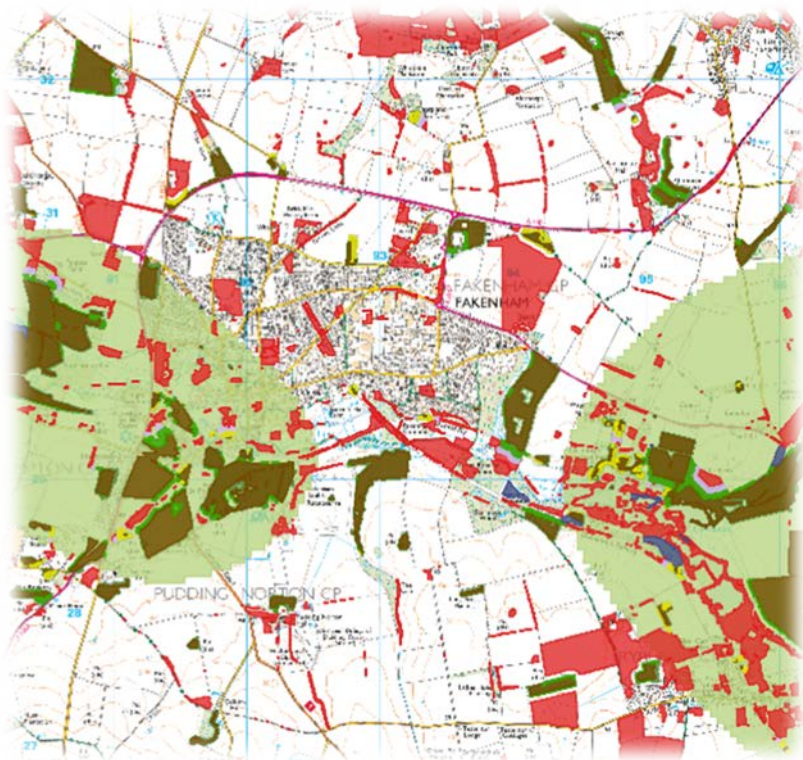
Figure 11: Woodland habitats and opportunities in Fakenham

## Woodland Habitat Recommendations

- Enlarge areas woodland with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas. There is particular scope for woodland enhancement around Fakenham.
- Manage and enhance the health and structure of existing woodlands to improve resilience.
- Supporting and re-introducing of traditional management practices where appropriate, such as coppicing.
- Replant ageing or diseased specimens (with climate and disease hardy species if possible) to ensure the future survival of these features.
- Retain and manage areas of woodland and trees, including those that contribute to the setting of the town;
- Promote the creation of new native woodland in general, and particularly in conjunction with new development as a means of screening built form.
- New planting associated with development should blend with existing features rather than simply trying to screen new development - layers of vegetation may be more appropriate than one thick screen using species local to the area.
- Reinststate hedges where these have been lost.
- Support the sensitive replacement of conifers with native tree species.

### Grassland and Heathland

The Grassland habitats in Fakenham are mainly located to the east and west of town with some pockets of grassland to the north of the Wensum.



The grassland and heathland opportunity mapping (fig. 12) shows the existing grassland and heathland in dark green, the broad grassland and heathland opportunity corridor in light green and the focussed opportunity locations in red.

Figure 12: Grassland and Heathland habitats and opportunities in Fakenham

### Grassland and Heathland Recommendations

- Enlarge areas of pasture, heathland and arable margins, with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas; There is scope in particular for grassland and heathland enhancement in the vicinity of Fakenham.
- Support the management and restoration of heathland. Where heathland restoration takes place on woodland, consider the scope for compensatory woodland planting on surrounding land to maintain wooded character. Robustly manage invasive species.
- Seek to improve habitat connectivity between isolated areas of undeveloped land.
- Reinstate grassland and heathland where these have been lost.

## Public Access Network in Fakenham

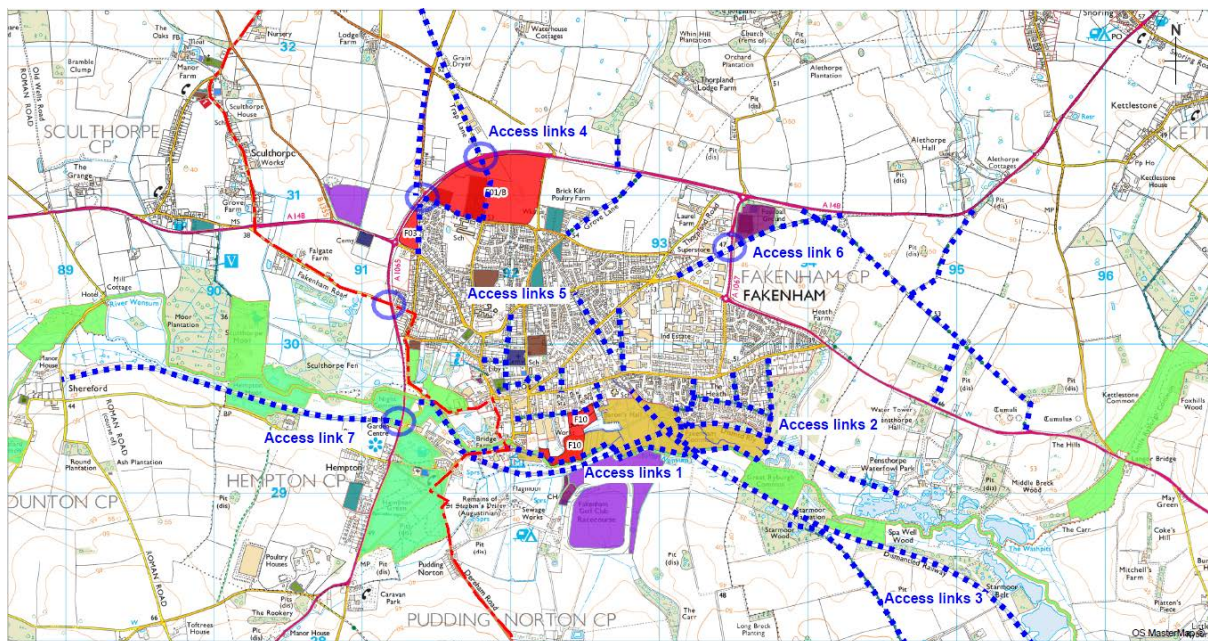


Figure 13: Access routes and opportunities in Fakenham

### Public Rights of Way

Fakenham is relatively poorly served by its public rights of way network. There are no significant routes to the north of the town, whilst there is one path to the south running along the attractive, but sensitive, River Wensum corridor. The public rights way within the town have been subsumed into the urban road network and provide little connectivity to the wider countryside.

None of the Norfolk Trails pass close to Fakenham and it would be a significant challenge to try to walk to the National Trail routes (14km to the Norfolk Coast path and 15km to the Peddars Way) using the rights of way network, with the majority of the walking would be on the road.

### Cycle routes

Sustrans National Cycle Route No 1 passes through west side Fakenham providing a cycle route to Sculthorpe to the north and Great Ryburgh to the south and is part of a long distance route that provides a route to Wells, Walsingham, Hunstanton, Dereham. This route is not a segregated route and is on main roads and cycle links from the town onto the National Route are poor and essentially entail cycling on the town's road network.

National Cycle Route 1 is the foremost long distance Sustrans Route that ultimately connects northern Scotland with Kent in the South East of England.

### Recommendations

Significant improvements are required to access links to the north of the town and elsewhere in order to take the pressure off the sensitive routes to the south.

Strengthen public access from the town into the countryside including the fragmented rights of way network, by introducing new linkages, including seeking opportunities to utilise the disused railway lines within some areas as longer distance cycle and footpath routes.

An off road cycling and walking route should be provided between the town and Pensthorpe Nature Reserve. The A148 presents a significant barrier and any development proposals should look at pedestrian and cycle connections across the road.

More detailed public access mapping, including the identification of opportunities, can be found at Appendix 5.

## Overarching Green Infrastructure Opportunities for Fakenham

Three 'green infrastructure Action Zones' have been identified for Fakenham

### River Wensum Ecological Corridor

- River Wensum SAC and SSSI requires sensitive management.
- Access routes are well used and should be improved in line with wider environmental sensitivities.
- Access to Pensthorpe along the river and former railway corridor should be created to provide a sustainable access corridor to the site.

### Great Eastern Access Corridor

- Generally, less ecologically sensitive.
- Deliver multi user access routes from the town northwards through to Walsingham and south to Ryburgh.
- Provision of pedestrian/cycle crossing points on A148.
- The north site allocations should provide significant access opportunities and linked open spaces.

### Town wide green infrastructure Improvements

- Access improvements along the disused railway corridors through the town
- Improvement of open space sites in the town
- Major development to bring forward large areas of public open space and multi-functional green infrastructure
- Improvements to the access/PROW network around the town to provide opportunities for access to the wider countryside around Fakenham.

These actions zones provide the framework for project considerations as part of the proposed allocations and have further detail in the Action Plan.

## Action Plan for Fakenham

Potential Projects and Action Plan				
Action Zone /Project name	Project outline	G.I. Function		
		Green Spaces	Habitats	Access
<b>River Wensum Ecological Corridor</b>				
	River Wensum SAC and SSSI requires sensitive management.		✓	
	Access routes are well used and should be improved in line with wider environmental sensitivities. <b>See 'Access links 1' on Fakenham access map</b>		✓	✓
	Off-road access to Pensthorpe should be provided including a pedestrian/cycle route along the former railway corridor to provide a sustainable access corridor to the site. <b>See 'Access links 2 &amp; 6' on Fakenham access map</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Great Eastern Corridor</b>				
	Deliver multi user access routes from the town northwards through to Walsingham and south to Ryburgh. <b>See 'Access links 3' on Fakenham access map</b>	✓	✓	✓
	Provision of pedestrian/cycle crossing points on A148.			✓
	The northern site allocations should provide significant access opportunities and contributions towards crossings of the A148. <b>See 'Access link 4' on Fakenham access map</b>	✓		✓

Town Wide green infrastructure Improvements				
	Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats	✓	✓	✓
	Access improvements along the disused railway corridors through the town <b>See 'Access link 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 7' on Fakenham access map</b>			✓
	Improvement of open space sites in the town for recreation and biodiversity	✓		✓
	Major development to bring forward large areas of public open space and multi-functional green infrastructure	✓	✓	✓
	Improvements to the access/PROW network around the town to provide opportunities for access to the wider countryside around Fakenham.			✓

## Fakenham: Principles to inform Site Allocations

**Land North of Rudham Stile Lane (F01/B)** This site falls within the Great Eastern and Town green infrastructure Corridors.

This is the largest proposed site allocation in the Local plan and is located to the north of the town. Currently within the site is Fakenham Rugby Club and green space to the rear of Fakenham Sports and Fitness Centre. A Restricted Byway runs along the southern boundary of the site and Trapp Lane is a section of old road that runs through the site to the north. Both routes are reasonably wide and surfaced and both connect with the A148 Fakenham Bypass with no segregated crossing points for walkers or cyclists across the bypass. There are no other public rights of way in the area and no connections north of the A148 in the vicinity of the site

There are no publicly accessible natural or semi natural green spaces on the site or within 1 km of the site. All of the nearest semi natural or natural greenspace sites are within (or abut) the sensitive SAC/SSSI Wensum corridor.

Hempton Green would be the nearest large (non sensitive) green space to the site, however, this site is around 2 km from the site.

Any development of the site should produce a site specific green infrastructure strategy that addresses the following:

- Provide access connections through the development to provide off road connections to the town and the adjacent development.
- Improvements to the Restricted Byway that runs along the southern boundary of the site
- Safe crossings of the A148 should be provided for cyclists and all other users.
- Linkages to potential access routes following the route of the Great Eastern Railway to towards Walsingham providing much needed recreational links to the north.
- Access routes should be through attractive green corridors with minimum 2m wide paths.
- Green corridors and open space should be provided to provide an amenity resource and to improve the landscape setting of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees should be maintained where possible.
- The open space, green corridors, landscaping and residential gardens should promote biodiversity and habitat corridors through the site.
- Pockets of greenspaces should be connected by green corridors provide access connections and habitat corridors.
- Signposts and map boards should be provided on the site to inform residents and visitors where the routes and connections are available in the area. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.

**Land at Junction of A148 and B1146 (F03)** This site falls within the Great Eastern and Town green infrastructure Corridors.

This site is in a similar location to the Rudham Stile Lane site, although further west. There are no public rights of way or green spaces on the site. Similar conditions (to the Rudham Stile Lane site) apply to the site in relation to access to nearby public rights of way and green spaces.

Any development of the site should produce a site specific green infrastructure strategy that addresses the following:

- A dog walking route should be provided around the site and a safe off the lead area should be provided on the open space. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.
- Provide access connections through the development to provide off road connections to the town and the adjacent development.
- Access routes should be through attractive green corridors with minimum 2m wide paths.
- Green corridors and open space should be provided to provide an amenity resource and to improve the landscape setting of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees should be maintained where possible.
- The open space, green corridors, landscaping and residential gardens should promote biodiversity and habitat corridors through the site.
- Pockets of greenspaces should be connected by green corridors provide access connections and habitat corridors.
- Signposts and map boards should be provided on the site to inform residents and visitors where the routes and connections are available in the area. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.

**Land South of Barons Close (F10)** This site falls within the River Wensum and Town green infrastructure Corridors.

This site is located to the south of the town on pasture land close to the River Wensum and south of the built up area of the town. The southern portion of the site abuts the Wensum SAC.

Extensive public access is available to the east of the site at 'Fakenham Common' (not registered common land). Fakenham Common is generally semi natural grassland with tree cover on the flood plain to the north of the Wensum. The course of 2 former railways run east to west and north to south, dissecting the site in 4. To the west of the site is 'Aldiss Community Park'.

Restricted Byways run along the northern and southern edges of the site. Restricted Byways are for use by carriage drivers (i.e. horse and cart), horses, cyclists and on foot.

RB10 (Restricted Byway – but marked on the ground as a footpath) runs through the north of the site from Barons Hall Lane through to Oxborough/Old Lane providing an off road connection into the town centre. The path has been fenced into a narrow corridor through the F10 site and through the adjacent industrial premises and is only passable on foot.

To the south of the site is RB 8 which runs along the river bank from Bridge Street through to Fakenham Common. Again, on the ground this path is marked as a footpath. The section of path along the southern boundary of site F10 is along a 3m wide track which serves light industrial premises to the east of the site.

This path forms part of an attractive route that follows the river all the way to Barber's Lane at the far east of the town. This route also connects with the course of the former Great Eastern Railway and with Fakenham Common.



### ***Land South of Barons Close (F10) cont...***

Any development of the site should produce a site specific green infrastructure strategy that addresses the following:

- Significant improvements to the Restricted Byway RB10 at the north of the site including widening of the route through the adjacent commercial premises to the west.
- A surfaced route should be provided through the site to link RB10 to the north and RB8 to the south.
- Provision of high quality open space and green infrastructure to the south of the residential development.
- The public open space should provide routes for all users including those with mobility challenges.
- A dog walking route should be provided together with a safe off the lead area should be provided in the open space. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.
- Access routes should be through attractive green corridors with minimum 2m wide paths.
- Green corridors and open space should be provided to provide an amenity resource and to improve the landscape setting of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees should be maintained where possible.
- The open space, green corridors, landscaping and residential gardens should promote biodiversity and habitat corridors through the site.
- Pockets of greenspaces should be connected by green corridors provide access connections and habitat corridors.
- Signposts and map boards should be provided on the site to inform residents and visitors where the routes and connections are available in the area.

# North Walsham

## Green Infrastructure Opportunities

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## North Walsham Green Infrastructure Opportunities



Figure 14: Green space around Victory Leisure Centre

North Walsham is the largest town in the district offering a range of services and employment. There has been sustained housing growth in recent years, although, there has been a loss of some of the traditional manufacturing jobs. North Walsham has strong links to Norwich and many people travel to Norwich for employment and is less than 30 minutes away by train.

### Development in North Walsham

North Walsham will see the delivery of at least 2,100 new homes up to 2036. Development proposals will be focused on 2 new allocations to the west and south of the town and are outlined below. Specific green infrastructure opportunities for each site will be detailed in the 'Opportunities for North Walsham' and the Action Plan.

At **Norwich Road and Nursery Drive (NW01/B)** the 18.5ha allocation proposes 350 homes with retention of the existing employment sites. This allocation is also delivering 3ha of public open space.

This site comprises a number of land uses including an existing engineering business premise and a garden centre. The land around the garden centre was formally nurseries, whilst a large portion of the site (to the SE) is an arable field. There are a number of hedgerows through the nurseries and around the fields. To the east of the site is the railway line which acts as a strong physical barrier separating the site from eastern part of town.

The **North Walsham Western Extension (NW62)** allocation is a large (95ha) mixed use sustainable urban extension that will deliver 1,800 dwellings and up to 7ha of employment land, together with the delivery of western link road, associated supporting infrastructure including a new primary school. This allocation is expected to deliver a significant amount of open space and access improvements.

This large site is predominantly made up of large arable fields that wrap around the west of the town. The land to the north of Cromer Road is mainly commercial or former industrial land with some areas that have fallen into disuse. There are a number of hedgerows around the arable fields. The Weavers Way and two public footpaths pass through the Western Extension allocation. These routes provide links into town and into the wider countryside. The Weavers Way is designated as a County Wildlife Site.

The southern edge of the Western Extension will be around 500m from Lord Anson's Wood and around 800m from Bryant's Heath SSSI and Open Access Land.

## Landscape Character

In the Landscape Character Assessment<sup>8</sup> the land to the south and west of North Walsham is characterised as ‘Low Plains Farmland’. The land to the north is ‘Tributary Farmland’ and the final landscape characteristic for North Walsham is the ‘River Valley’.

Tributary Farmland is characterised by generally open and rolling/undulating rural farmland with some elevated plateau areas and a rich diversity of minor settlement, woodland and historic estates.

The Low Plains Farmland Type is characterised by a flat or gently undulating open landscape with long, uninterrupted views, predominantly arable land use and dispersed rural settlements, including the expanding market town of North Walsham. The landscape becomes less enclosed and wooded towards the coast, as a result of 20th Century agriculture and hedgerow removals.

The valley floor of the River Ant provides a strong contrast to the typically open, large-scale arable landscapes through which they pass, being characterised by a pastoral land use, a high level of tree cover and a linear settlement pattern, with significant local variations in land cover and, consequently, in views.

### Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

The following information is drawn from the 2018 landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and is a summary of the landscape strategy and guidelines in the LCA and should be read with the document as a whole. The LCA will inform how green infrastructure is delivered in respect of how green infrastructure proposals can contribute to the landscape character.

<b>Landscape Characteristics and Strategy: North Walsham</b>
<b>Tributary Farmland</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve sense of rurality.</li> <li>• Conserve the nucleated character of villages.</li> <li>• Protect and appropriately manage the rich cultural heritage of the area.</li> <li>• Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats.</li> <li>• Manage the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>• Manage activities such as mineral extraction.</li> </ul>
<b>Low Plains Farmland</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats.</li> <li>• Conserve sense of rurality.</li> <li>• Conserve the nucleated character of villages.</li> <li>• Protect and appropriately manage the historic parks.</li> <li>• Prepare for climate change and potential loss of features through disease.</li> <li>• Retain the character of the skyline.</li> <li>• Enhance public rights of way.</li> </ul>
<b>River Valley – River Ant and Tributaries</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the small scale of valley landscapes.</li> <li>• Maintain rural character.</li> <li>• Integrate valley-side development.</li> <li>• Protect high ecological status.</li> <li>• Protect and manage cultural heritage assets.</li> <li>• Strengthen public access.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment. Prepared by LUC for North Norfolk District Council. November 2018

## Green Spaces in North Walsham

North Walsham has a number of green spaces throughout the town including the Memorial Park and greenspace close to the leisure centre. There are a number of smaller open spaces peppered around the town, together with large areas of greenspace at North Walsham Football Club and at the schools.

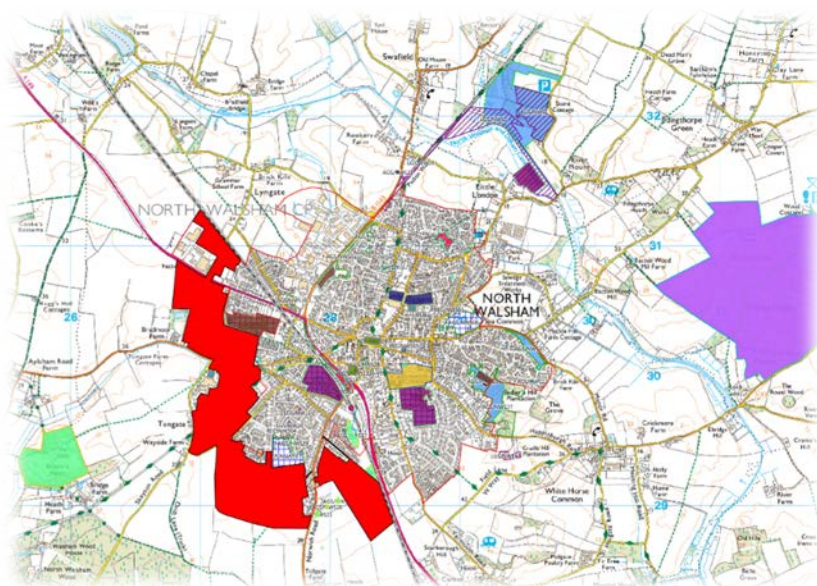


Figure 15: Overview Map of green spaces in North Walsham

The largest public open space within the town is Memorial Park which is generally within walking distance of much of the town and has tennis courts, sports pitches and play areas on the site.

The other larger areas of greenspace in the town do not have general public access and are associated with the schools, college and the football club.

Saddlers Wood provides an area of natural greenspace on the SW edge of the town close to Brick Kiln Road estate.

The ANGSt standards, recommended by Natural England, suggests that North Walsham has good access to the whole range of natural greenspaces from small local 2ha sites through to the large strategic 500ha sites.

### North Walsham Football Club

North Walsham Football Club is a 5ha site that has a number of football pitches and a clubhouse and car park. The Football Club have aspirations for improved and enhanced facilities that would enable the club to provide a broader football offer to the community and potentially be a host for other sports.

### Registered Common Land and Access Land

There are no registered commons within the town boundary of North Walsham, however, there is a large area of common land to the west – Bryant's Heath (also a SSSI) which is over 17ha in size and can be accessed from the town via the town from a public footpath from Tungate Farm and is close to the Weavers Way. To the east of the town is Witton Heath and Bacton Wood which is a very large, publicly owned, site of 113ha. This site is designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as 'Open Access Land'. The site is over 1km from the town and although it does have public access into the site it is a significant walk along the local road network.

## Core Habitats in North Walsham

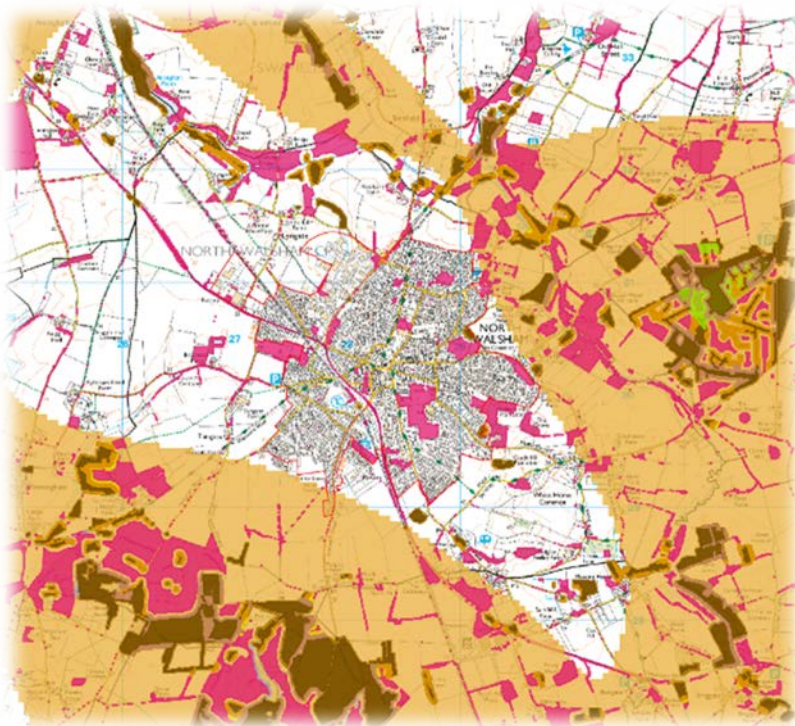
This Background paper considers the information taken from the Green Infrastructure Mapping Project on 'Core Habitats' for North Walsham which are: Wetland, Grassland & Heathland and Woodland. The broad G.I. corridors and the overlain habitat mapping can be seen at Appendix 3.

### Woodland

There are a number of wooded areas in North Walsham with the most extensive being the Sadler's Hill Plantation and woodland at Spa Common, including the Alder Carr north of the sewage works.

To the east of the town is Bacton Woods which is a large area of woodland – including a significant proportion of ancient woodland.

To the south west of the town is Lord Hanson's Wood and the woods associated with Westwick Hall.



The woodland opportunity mapping (fig. 16) shows the areas of the existing woodland network in dark brown, the broad woodland opportunity corridor in light brown and the focussed opportunity locations in pink.

Figure 16: Woodland habitats and opportunities in North Walsham

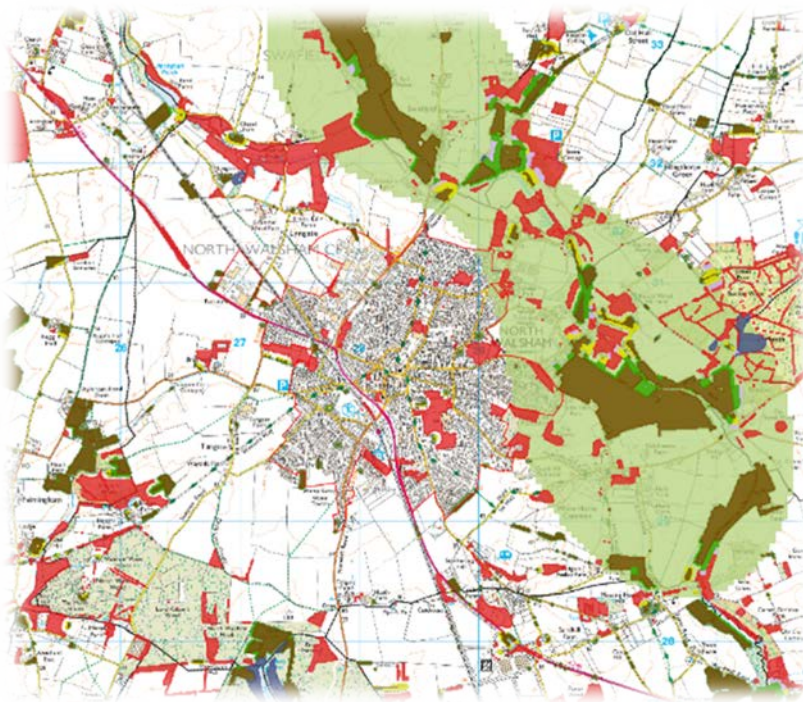
### Woodland Habitat Recommendations

- There is particular scope for woodland enhancement in the vicinity of North Walsham. Enlarge areas woodland with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.
- Manage and enhance the health and structure of existing woodlands to improve resilience.
- Supporting and re-introducing of traditional management practices where appropriate, such as coppicing;
- Replant ageing or diseased specimens (with climate and disease hardy species if possible) to ensure the future survival of these features.
- Retain and manage areas of woodland and trees, including those that contribute to the setting of the town;
- Promote the creation of new native woodland in general, and particularly in conjunction with new development as a means of screening built form.

- New planting associated with development should blend with existing features rather than simply trying to screen new development - layers of vegetation may be more appropriate than one thick screen using species local to the area.
- Reinstate hedges where these have been lost.
- Support the sensitive replacement of conifers with native tree species.

### Grassland and Heathland

Enlarge areas of pasture, woodland, scrub, heathland and arable margins, with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats and improving ecological connectivity for a variety of species including great crested newts, reptiles, bats, birds and insects.



The grassland and heathland opportunity mapping (fig. 17) shows the existing grassland and heathland in dark green, the broad grassland and heath opportunity corridor in light green and the focussed opportunity locations in red.

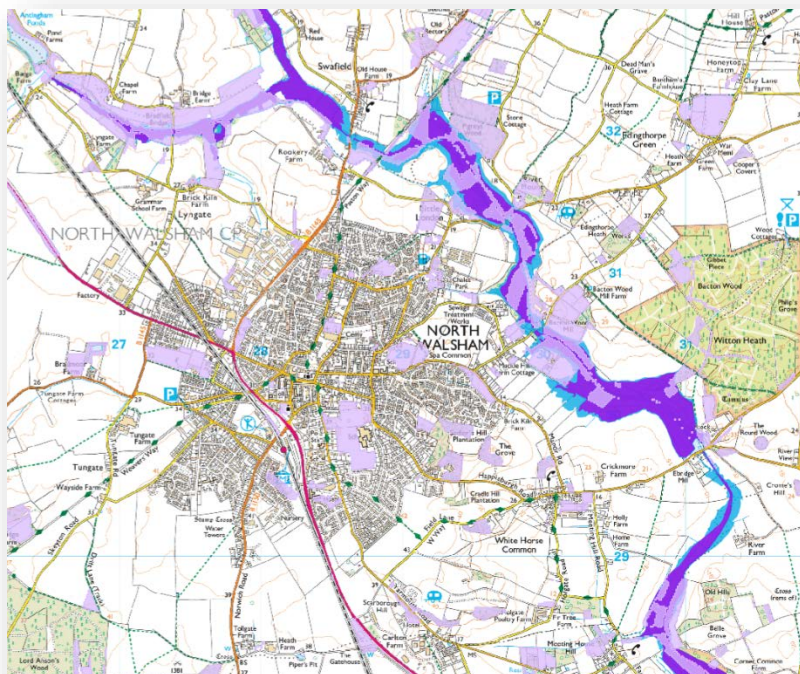
Figure 17: Grassland and Heathland habitats and opportunities in North Walsham

### Grassland and Heathland Recommendations

- There is particular scope for grassland and heathland enhancement around North Walsham including the enlargement of areas of pasture, heathland and arable margins, with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.
- Support the management and restoration of heathland. Where heathland restoration takes place on woodland, consider the scope for compensatory woodland planting on surrounding land to maintain wooded character. Robustly manage invasive species.
- Seek to improve habitat connectivity between isolated areas of undeveloped land.
- Reinstate grassland and heathland where these have been lost.

## Wetland

There are no rivers or watercourses running through the town. The major water features in the area run to the north and north east of the town in the Bradfield Beck and the disused North Walsham and Dilham Canal. The canal once connected Antingham (Bone Mills) and North Walsham to the Broads network at Dilham. The fields and meadows along the canal and Bradfield Beck fall in Flood Zones 2 & 3.



The wetland opportunity mapping (fig. 18) shows the broad wetland opportunity corridor in light purple and specific opportunity location in dark purple.

Figure 18: Wetland habitats and opportunities in North Walsham

## Wetland Habitat Recommendations

- Seek to re-connect fragmented wetland habitats. There is scope in particular for enhancement of all habitats, including wetland, around North Walsham.
- Protect the high ecological status and water quality of the river valleys, recognising that varied habitats which enhance biodiversity likewise enhance landscape interest and character.



## Public Access Network in North Walsham

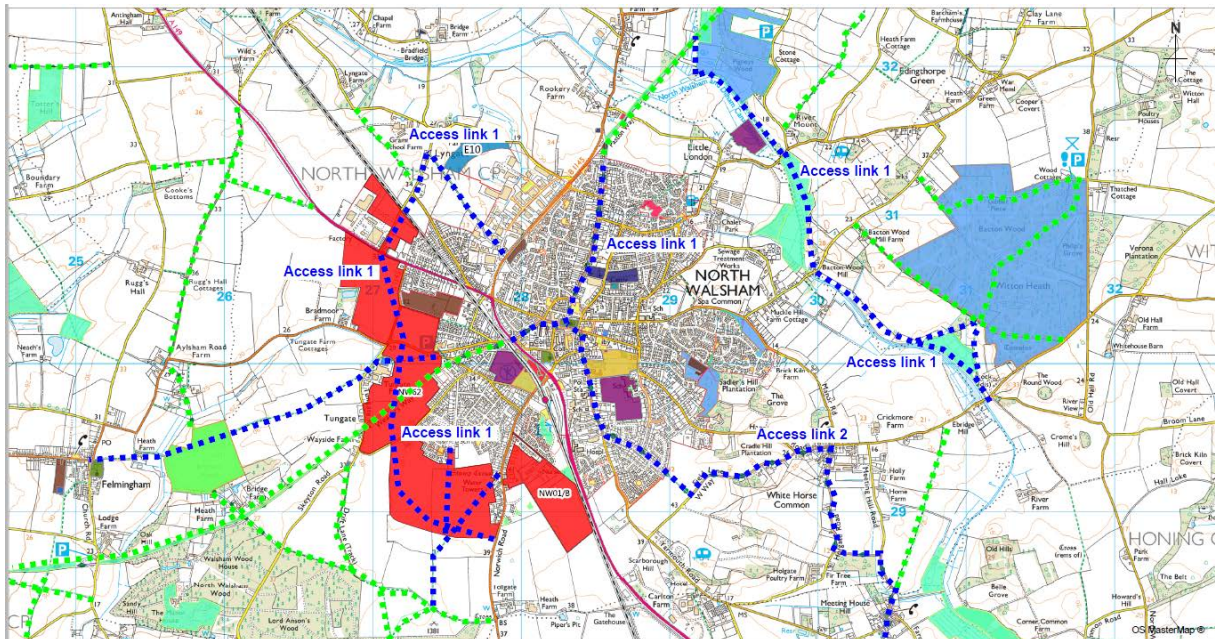


Figure 19: Access routes and opportunities in North Walsham

### Norfolk Trails

North Walsham is well served by the Norfolk Trail network with 2 Trails providing three routes out of town. The 61 mile Weavers Way is a long distance route that connects Cromer to Great Yarmouth via North Walsham. The Weavers Way also connects with The Norfolk Coast Path, Angles Way, Wherryman's Way and the Paston Way. There is also a connection to the Bure Valley Way and Marriot's Way at Aylsham. The route out to the west follows the former course of the xx railway and provides an off road link all the way to Aylsham.

The Paston Way is a 22-mile trail that links the town with the Norfolk Coast Path at Bacton. The first 1.5 miles out of town follows the former railway cutting and provides a link to the public footpath along the route of the old North Walsham and Dilham canal. The trail passes through Knapton Cutting County Wildlife Site.

### Public Rights of Way

The west and south west of the town are reasonable well served by public rights of way. There is a public footpath that provides a link from Aylsham Road, past the Rossi leisure complex at Tungate Fam and then out into the wider countryside and providing access into Bryant's Heath.

Another footpath provides a link from the water towers on Norwich Road towards and through North Walsham Heath and around the northern boundary of Lord Anson's Wood. This network can be followed, via a short section on the road, to link with the Weavers Way.

The east of the town is less well served by paths out from the town into the countryside. However, a footpath along the former canal can be access from the Paston Way leading towards Spa Common.

### Recommendations

Aim to improve access by linking existing public rights of way, e.g. Weaver's Way and Paston Way Recreational Routes through North Walsham, with neighbouring villages, to provide improved non-car routes and enhance opportunities for enjoying and understanding the countryside.

More detailed public access mapping, including the identification of opportunities, can be found at Appendix 6.

## Overarching Green Infrastructure Opportunities for North Walsham

Five 'green infrastructure Action Zones' have been identified for North Walsham:

### Weavers Way Corridor

- Key access route providing links to wider Norfolk Trails and Norfolk Coast Path
- Improve biodiversity along the corridor
- Improve access routes connecting to the Weavers Way
- Explore off-road connections on the route to the south east of the town
- Danger of severance from western extension and link road from Western Extension
- Maintain and improve signage and interpretation along the route.

### Paston Way Corridor

- Key access route towards the coast and Norfolk Coast Path
- Enhance the road based connection through the town
- Improve biodiversity and habitats along the corridor

### Witton Heath to Bacton Corridor

- Improve the poor access connections from town
- Improve biodiversity and habitats along the corridor

### Canal Corridor

- Improvements to public access along the canal
- Improve wetland habitats along the corridor
- Provide connections from the town and other routes to the corridor

### Town wide green infrastructure Improvements

- Improvements to all core habitats through-out the town
- Improvements to the access/PROW network around the town to provide opportunities for access to the wider countryside around North Walsham
- Explore opportunities for improved connections around the east of town link the Weavers Way to the can route

These actions zones provide the framework for project considerations as part of the proposed allocations and have further detail in the Action Plan.

## Action Plan for North Walsham

Potential Projects and Action Plan				
Action Zone /Project name	Project outline	green infrastructure Function		
		Green Spaces	Habitats	Access
Weavers Way Corridor				
	Key corridor providing links to wider Norfolk Trails and Norfolk Coast Path	✓	✓	✓
	Improve biodiversity along the corridor		✓	
	Improve access routes connecting to the Weavers Way <b>See 'Access links 1' on North Walsham access map</b>			✓
	Explore off-road connections on the route to the south east of the town <b>See 'Access links 2' on North Walsham access map</b>			✓
	Ensure there is no severance from western extension and link road with the route taking priority	✓		✓
	Maintain and improve signage and interpretation along the route.			✓
Paston Way Corridor				
	Key access route towards the coast and Norfolk Coast Path	✓	✓	✓
	Enhance the road based connection through the town <b>See 'Access links ' on North Walsham access map</b>			✓
	Improve biodiversity and habitats along the corridor		✓	

Witton Heath to Bacton Corridor				
	Improve the poor access connections from town	✓	✓	✓
	Improve biodiversity and habitats along the corridor		✓	
Canal Corridor				
	Improvements to public access along the canal	✓	✓	✓
	Improve wetland habitats along the corridor		✓	
	Provide connections from the town and other routes to the corridor			✓
Town Wide green infrastructure Improvements				
Habitats	Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats	✓	✓	✓
	Grassland and heathland enhancement around North Walsham including the enlargement of areas of pasture, heathland and arable margins, with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.		✓	
	Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats. There is scope in particular for enhancement of all habitats, including wetland, around North Walsham.		✓	
Access and Green Spaces	Improvements to the access/PROW network around the town to provide opportunities for access to the wider countryside around Fakenham.			✓
	Improvement of open space sites in the town for recreation and biodiversity	✓	✓	
	New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.	✓	✓	✓

## North Walsham: green infrastructure Principles to Inform Site Allocations

**North Walsham Western Extension (NW62)** This site falls within the Weavers Way and Town green infrastructure Corridors.

This is a large scale urban extension covering over 95 hectares of land around the western side of North Walsham. The majority of the land is arable fields (with hedgerows/trees) with a small amount of brownfield land to the north between the Cromer Road and the railway.

### Access

The Weavers Way and 2 public footpaths cross the site. The Weavers Way follows the course of the old railway line which runs through the site. This section of the Weavers Way is also a County Wildlife Site. The Weavers Way is a key green infrastructure corridor and improvements are required to improve the route, improve connectivity from the development (and rest of the town) to the route and improve biodiversity along the route in line with the County Wildlife Site's management plan. The route should be strengthened by being provided in a green corridor.

North Walsham FP1 runs to the north of the Weavers Way from Aylsham Rd/Station Road and runs past JR's Leisure, across Tungate Rd, and on to Bryant's Heath.

North Walsham FP6 runs from the water towers on Norwich Road across the site and connects to the rights of way network around North Walsham Heath & lord Anson's Wood.

North Walsham FP17 runs along the boundary of the site between Queensway and Greens Road. The route follows a narrow corridor between the site and North Walsham Football Club.

Both FP1 and FP6 provide excellent opportunities for connections into the wider countryside, providing circular walks, connections to the Weavers Way and extensive routes into the wider countryside.

### Green Spaces

The nearest green space is the 'trackside' recreation ground which has a skate park, play area, amenity open space and a dog exercise area. However, this site is well over 1km from most parts of the site.

The largest open space in the town, Memorial Park, is 1.5km to 2km from the site.

North Walsham Football Club abuts the site at Greens Road which has a number of full size and junior pitches. The club has changing rooms and a clubhouse.

Any development of the site should produce a site specific green infrastructure strategy that addresses the following:

- FP1, FP6 & FP17 should be provided in green corridors within the site with off-site improvements to the paths where they provide linkages into town and into the wider countryside.
- The design of the link road and other highways should sympathetically incorporate safe 'multi-user' priority crossing points and particular care should be given to the potential severance of the Weavers Way.
- The site should strengthen the access routes by providing an off road cycle/pedestrian route linking with all the access routes and the key services and wider town.
- It is expected that the development delivers significant areas of open space – including provision of a single large area that offers a range of recreational opportunities.
- New green spaces should be linked by green corridors offering access connections and habitat corridors.

- Landscaping and open space provision on the site should exploit opportunities to improve the landscape setting of the southern and western parts of North Walsham.
- There should be contributions to enhancements at North Walsham Football Club and the site should sympathetically landscape and develop in this area to strengthen the green infrastructure.
- Pockets of greenspaces should be connected by green corridors provide access connections and habitat corridors.
- Landscaping and open space provision on the site should exploit opportunities to improve the landscape setting of the approaches to North Walsham.
- On site routes should be through attractive green corridors with minimum 2m wide paths.
- Green corridors and open space should be provided to provide an amenity resource and to improve the landscape setting of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees should be maintained where possible.
- The open space, green corridors, landscaping and residential gardens should promote biodiversity and habitat corridors through the site.
- Signposts and map boards should be provided on the site to inform residents and visitors where the routes and connections are available in the area. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.

**Norwich Road and Nursery Drive (NW01/B) This site falls within the Town green infrastructure Corridor.**

The site is located to the south of town between Norwich Road and the railway line. The site includes an existing and established garden centre and a light industrial engineering company. A large part of the site is an arable field and the remainder is former nursery land.

There are no public rights of way through the site, with the nearest route being North Walsham FP6 which runs from Norwich Road to North Walsham Heath & Lord Anson's Wood. There are no opportunities to access the countryside to the east or the south of the site and users will have to cross the Norwich Road to access the footpath network.

The nearest public open space is the 'trackside' recreation ground at around 1km from the site.

Any development of the site should produce a site specific green infrastructure strategy that addresses the following:

- To provide around 3 hectares of public open space on the site.
- Pockets of greenspaces should be connected by green corridors provide access connections and habitat corridors.
- Landscaping and open space provision on the site should exploit opportunities to improve the landscape setting of the southern approach to North Walsham.
- Established hedges should be retained as much as possible with extra planting provided on the site.
- Access routes should be through attractive green corridors with minimum 2m wide paths.
- Green corridors and open space should be provided to provide an amenity resource and to improve the landscape setting of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees should be maintained where possible.
- The open space, green corridors, landscaping and residential gardens should promote biodiversity and habitat corridors through the site.
- Signposts and map boards should be provided on the site to inform residents and visitors where the routes and connections are available in the area. Litter and dog waste bins should be provided on the access routes and in the open space.

# Other Growth Locations

## Green Infrastructure Opportunities

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## Green Infrastructure in other Growth Locations

<b>Towns</b>	<b>green infrastructure Function</b>		
<p><b>Holt</b></p> <p>Holt is an attractive Georgian market town with a vibrant shopping area based around the historic town centre.</p> <p>Holt is surrounded by a high quality landscape with the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the north of the town and the other areas around the town, which are not formally designated, are also attractive and important to the setting of the town.</p>	<p><b>Green Spaces</b></p> <p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Improvement of open space sites in the town for recreation and biodiversity</p> <p>New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.</p> <p>Sites to the South of the Bypass should deliver enhanced connectivity to the town and adjacent health provision.</p>	<p><b>Habitats</b></p> <p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats</p> <p>Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.</p> <p>Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.</p>	<p><b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b></p> <p><u>Overview</u></p> <p>No National or Norfolk Trails</p> <p>Sustrans RCR at High Kelling</p> <p>Majority of public rights of way network to south of A148.</p> <p>No routes to the north of the town.</p> <p>Lack of connectivity across the A148 from the SE of town – i.e. the Heath Farm developments.</p> <p>Potential for routes through Holt Hall</p> <p>Provision of safe crossings of A148</p> <p>Improvements to the access/PROW network around the town to provide opportunities for access to the wider countryside around the town.</p>
<p><b>Hoveton</b></p> <p>Hoveton and Wroxham are two large villages on either side of the River Bure; together they form one of the most important boating and tourism centres of the Broads area.</p> <p>The middle Bure, downstream of Wroxham Bridge, is administered by the Broads Authority and is amongst the most heavily used stretches of the Broads waterway system.</p>	<p><b>Green Spaces</b></p> <p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Improvement of open space sites in the town for recreation and biodiversity</p> <p>New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.</p>	<p><b>Habitats</b></p> <p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats</p> <p>Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.</p> <p>Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.</p>	<p><b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b></p> <p><u>Overview</u></p> <p>Bure Valley Path connects at stations.</p> <p>Limited rights of way from town into the countryside.</p> <p>Most of the network is to the east of the town – towards Neatishead.</p>



<b>Sheringham</b>	<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>Habitats</b>	<b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b>
<p>Sheringham has significant environmental constraints which surround the town and limited potential to accommodate growth. Sheringham is set amongst some of the most attractive landscape in Norfolk.</p> <p>Most of the surrounding landscape falls within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and those areas which are not formally designated are nevertheless attractive and important to the setting of the town.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Improvement of open space sites in the town for recreation and biodiversity</p> <p>New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats</p> <p>Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.</p> <p>Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.</p>	<p>Coast path runs along the seafront. No Norfolk Trails.</p> <p>Most PROW are to the east of the town and provide connections to Beeston Bump, Beeston Regis and the dense network to the south of The Runtons.</p>
<b>Stalham</b>	<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>Habitats</b>	<b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b>
<p>Stalham acts as a gateway to the Norfolk Broads and a local retail and service centre, however it does not have the same range of facilities and services as some of the other towns in the district.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Improvement of open space sites in the town for recreation and biodiversity</p> <p>New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats</p> <p>Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.</p> <p>Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.</p>	<p>The Weavers Way passes through the town, albeit predominantly following a road route along the High Street and Yarmouth Road.</p> <p>The Weavers Way follows the old railway route to the west of the town for over 7km.</p> <p>There are a number of PROW to the NW of town which provide connections towards Ingham.</p>

<b>Wells next the Sea</b>	<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>Habitats</b>	<b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b>
<p>Wells is situated within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with the attractive surrounding countryside, quality built heritage and the proximity of a number of international wildlife designations makes Wells an attractive but constrained location for growth.</p> <p>Wells has a thriving tourism industry that supports the economic vitality of the town. Due to the remote rural location and the limited public transport available many visitors arrive by car.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Improvement of open space sites in the town for recreation and biodiversity</p> <p>New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats</p> <p>Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.</p> <p>Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.</p>	<p>The Peddars Way and Coast Path passes through the town offering attractive route through the marshes to the east and towards the beach to the north.</p> <p>National Cycle Route No1 passes through the town.</p>

<b>Villages</b>			
<b>Blakeney</b>	<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>Habitats</b>	<b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b>
Blakeney is an attractive and popular village on the coast with a historic quayside and is situated within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The attractive coast, attractive surrounding countryside, quality built heritage and the proximity of a number of international wildlife designations makes Blakeney an attractive but constrained location for growth. The areas that are undeveloped provide important green spaces and recreation areas that are an essential part of the character of the village.	<u>Overview/Recommendations</u> Improvement of open space sites for recreation and biodiversity  New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.	<u>Overview/Recommendations</u> Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats  Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.  Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.	<u>Overview</u> The Peddars Way and Coast Path pass through Blakeney. There are a few PROW to the south of the town providing east west routes and, to a lesser extent, connections to the wider countryside.
<b>Briston and Melton Constable</b>	<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>Habitats</b>	<b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b>
Briston & Melton Constable are two separate villages that are closely related in terms of their close proximity to each other and residents use the combined facilities which are available. Briston has no significant landscape designations or other significant constraints.	<u>Overview/Recommendations</u> Improvement of open space sites for recreation and biodiversity  New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.	<u>Overview/Recommendations</u> Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats  Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.  Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.	<u>Overview</u> Briston is poorly served by PROW. There is, effectively one path that runs south of the village from The Lane. Melton Constable is equally poorly served by PROW with only a single footpath in the entire parish which heads north towards Stody.

<b>Ludham</b>	<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>Habitats</b>	<b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b>
<p>Ludham is a medium sized village with a good range of services and a range of community facilities. Womack Water provides access to the Broads waterways and is a popular visitor destination, particularly for those arriving by boat. The village plays an important role in meeting the needs of residents, adjacent villages and tourists.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Improvement of open space sites for recreation and biodiversity</p> <p>New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats</p> <p>Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.</p> <p>Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.</p>	<p><u>Overview</u></p> <p>Ludham has a reasonable selection of PROW providing routes in various directions, including SW towards the River Thurne, The Broads and connections with the Weavers Way at Heigham Bridge.</p>
<b>Mundesley</b>	<b>Green Spaces</b>	<b>Habitats</b>	<b>Access &amp; Public Rights of Way</b>
<p>Mundesley is a large and popular village on the coast. Mundesley also has a thriving tourism industry that supports the economic vitality of the town. Mundesley is situated on high cliffs over a wide sandy beach and the beach and seafront are major assets for the economy and local environment. Parts of the village are on high ground and are visible from the wider surrounding countryside. The centre of the village is designated as a Conservation Area and land to the south is within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Gold Park and beach front area are important areas of open space.</p> <p>Improvement of open space sites for recreation and biodiversity</p> <p>New development should deliver high quality open space that provides a range of opportunities and incorporates dog walking routes and bins.</p>	<p><u>Overview/Recommendations</u></p> <p>Conserve and expand areas of woodland and other non-arable habitats</p> <p>Grassland and heathland enhancement with a focus on re-connecting fragmented habitats to join up with those in the more biodiverse areas.</p> <p>Re-connect fragmented wetland habitats.</p>	<p>The Coast Path runs through Mundesley as does the Paston Way. The National Cycle Regional Route 30 also passes.</p>



North Norfolk District Council

# Green Infrastructure Appendices Settlement Maps

Published to support Regulation 18 Draft Plan (Part1) consultation May  
2019

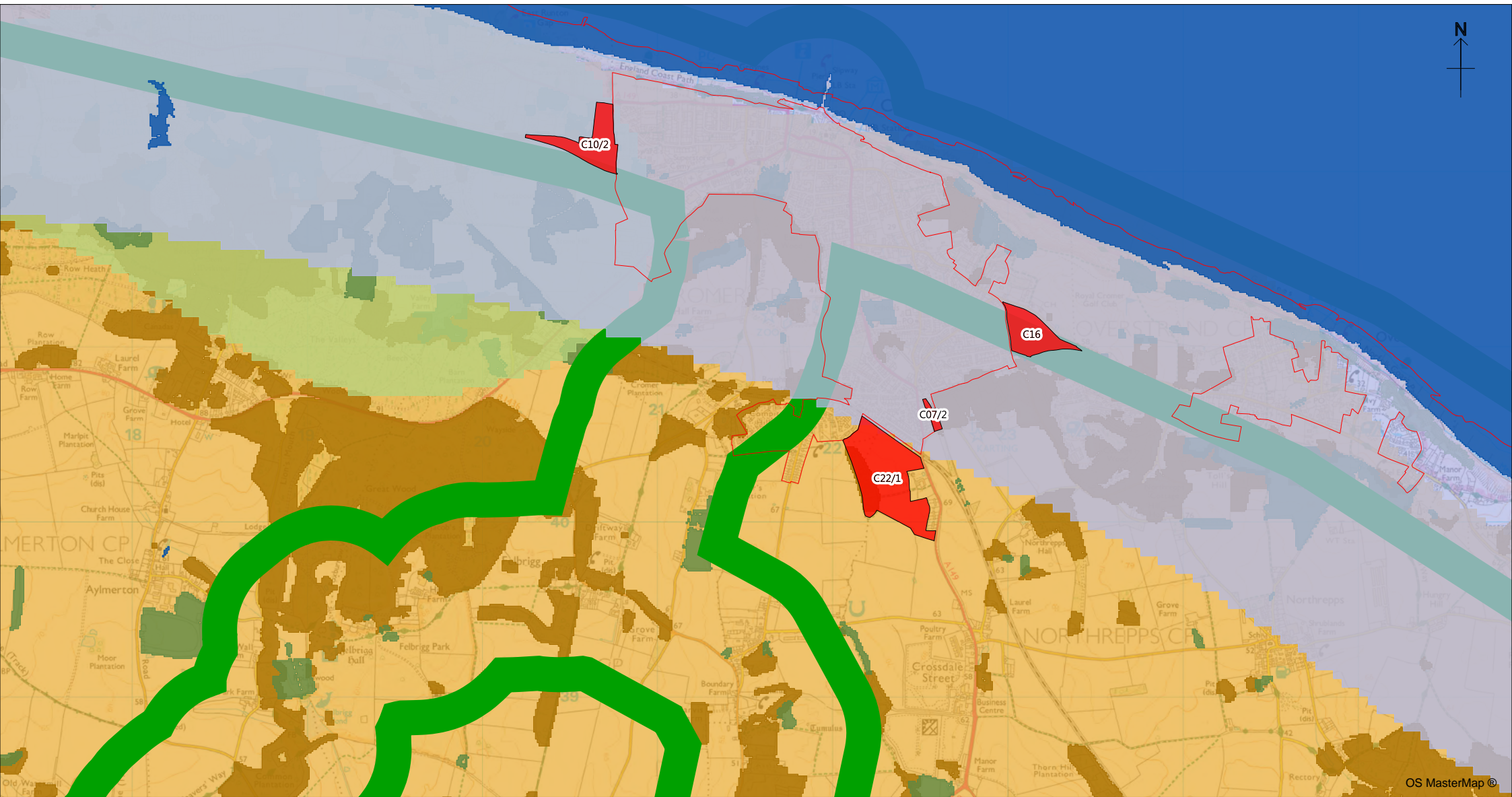


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Planning Policy Team**

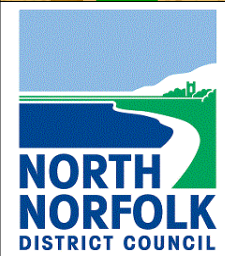
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[planningpolicy@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@north-norfolk.gov.uk)

# APPENDIX 1



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**Cromer Broad GI Corridors**  
 Grass and Heathland = Green  
 Woodland = Brown  
 Wetland = Blue  
 Proposed site allocations = Red

Scale = 1:21213

SH

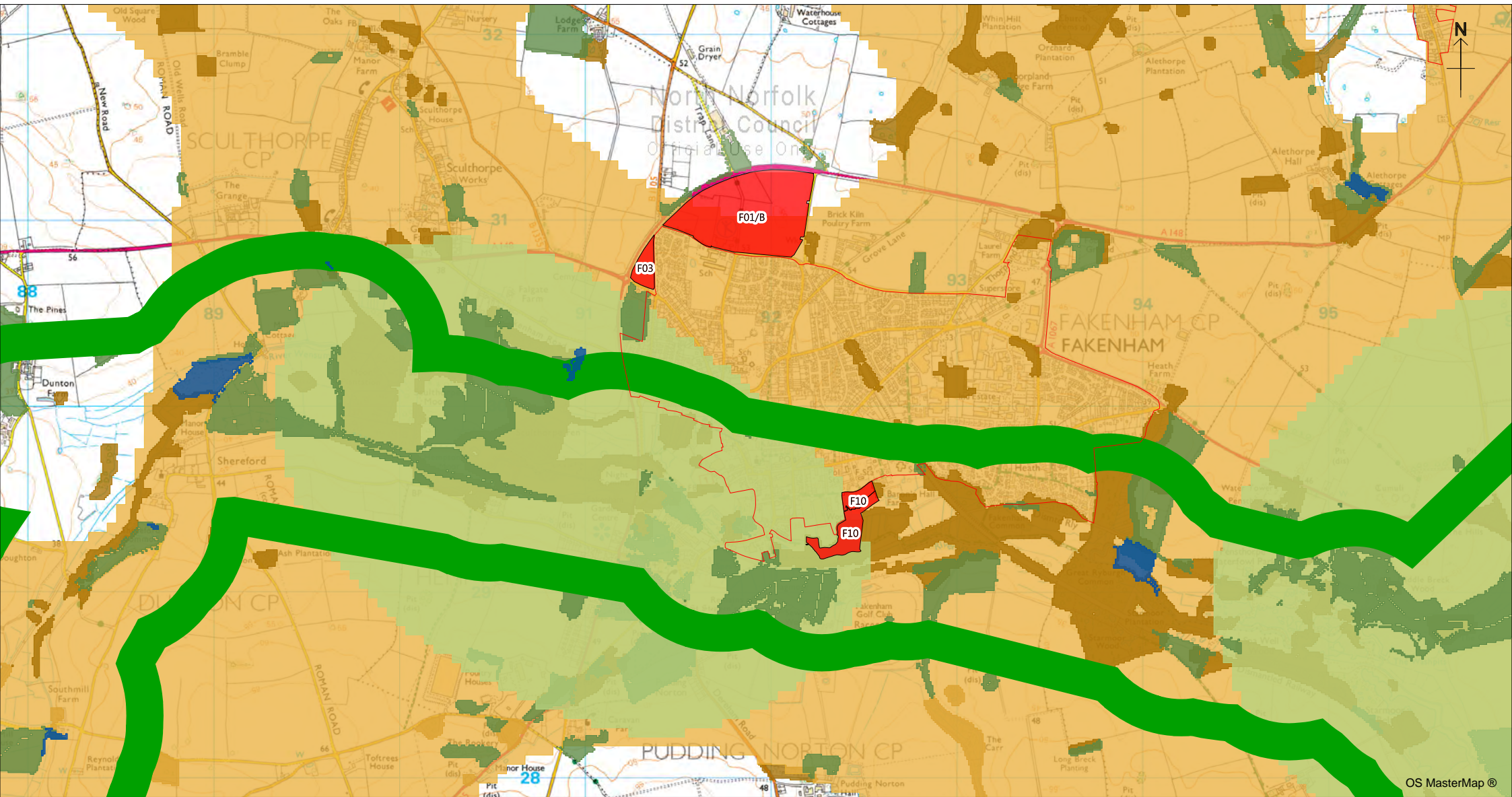
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# APPENDIX 2



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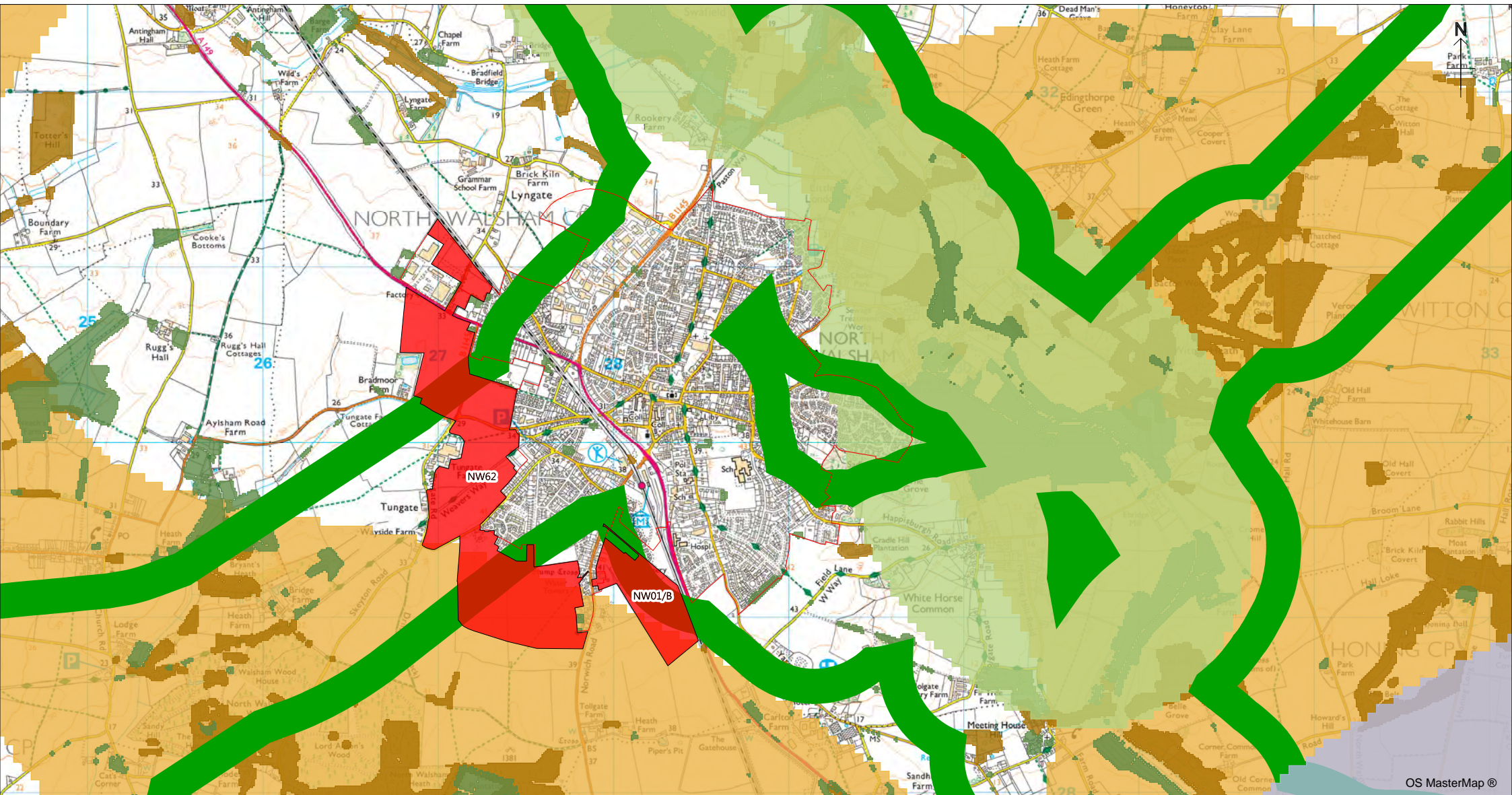
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 Proposed site allocations = Red

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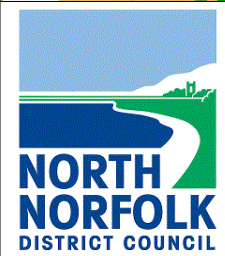
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# APPENDIX 3



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## North Walsham Broad GI Corridors

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- Woodland = Brown
- Wetland = Blue
- Proposed site allocations = Red

Scale = 1:21213

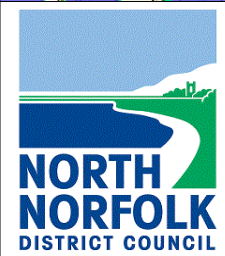
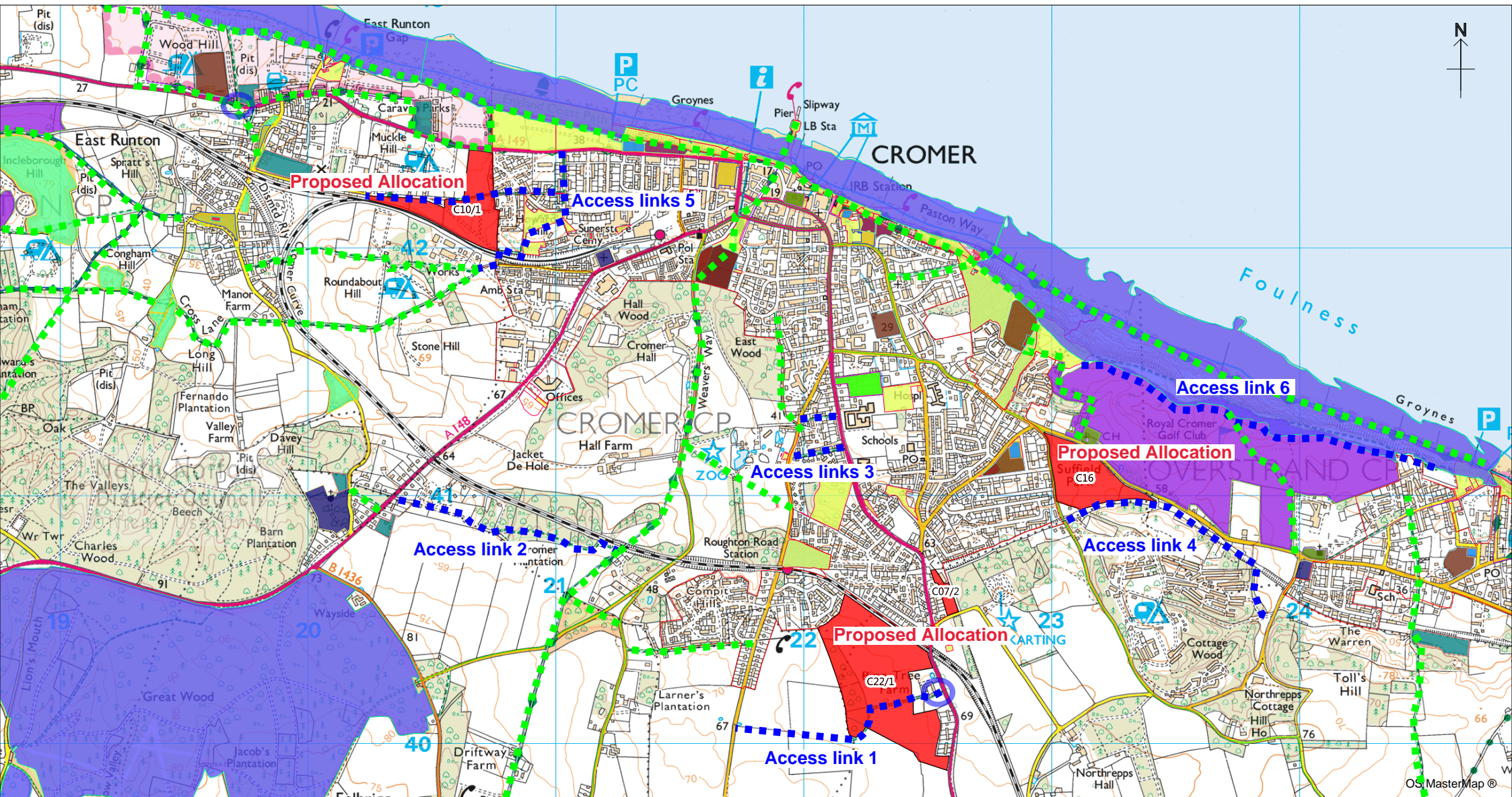
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## Cromer Green Infrastructure - Access

Green: existing access links  
 Blue: access links that require providing or enhancement

Scale = 1:15000 +SH+

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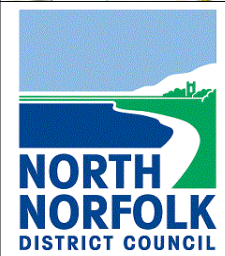
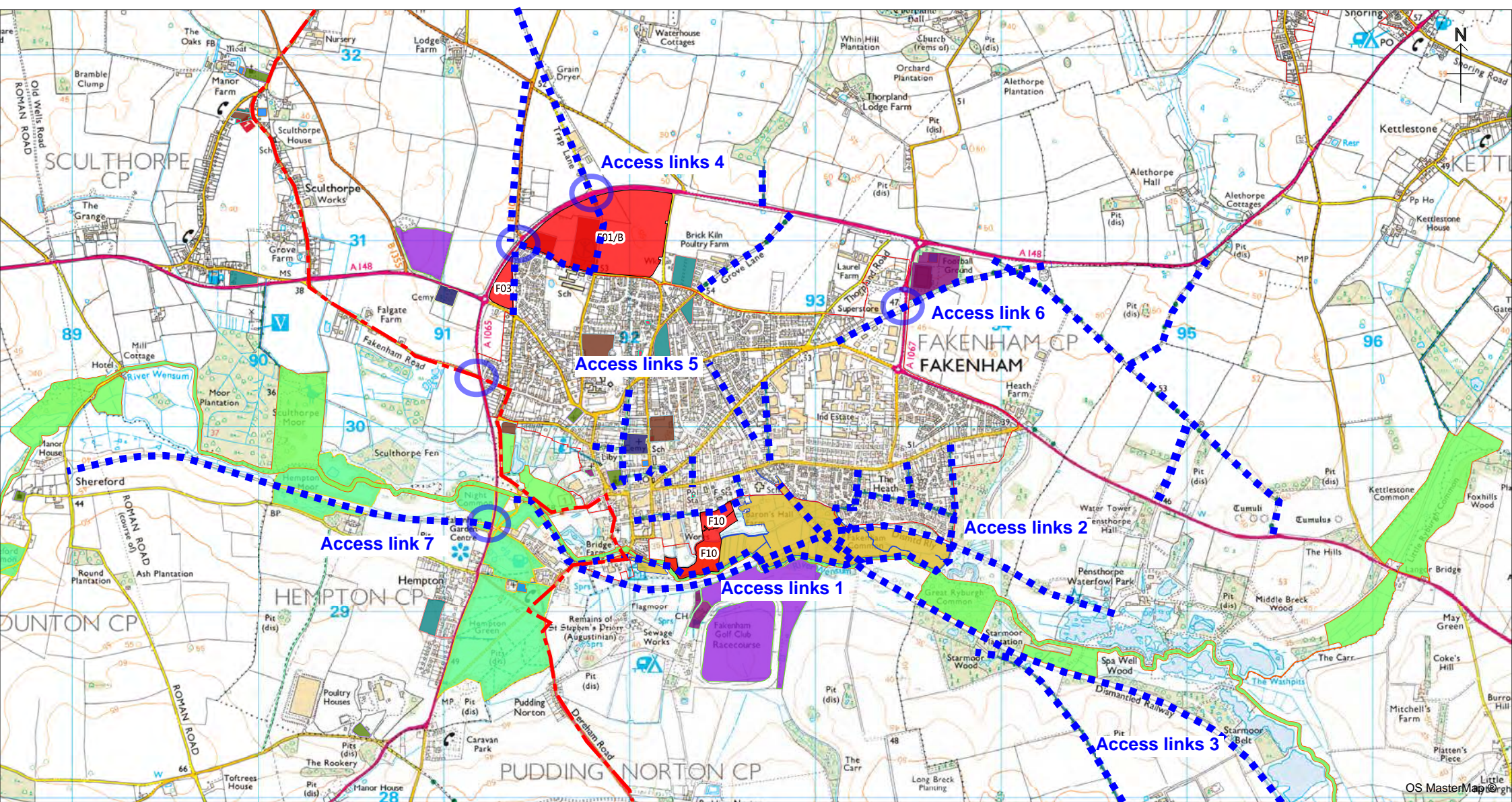
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# APPENDIX 5



## Fakenham Green Infrastructure - Access

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+SH+

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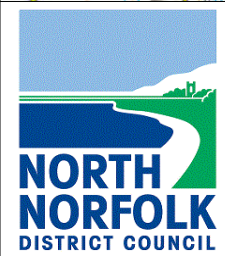
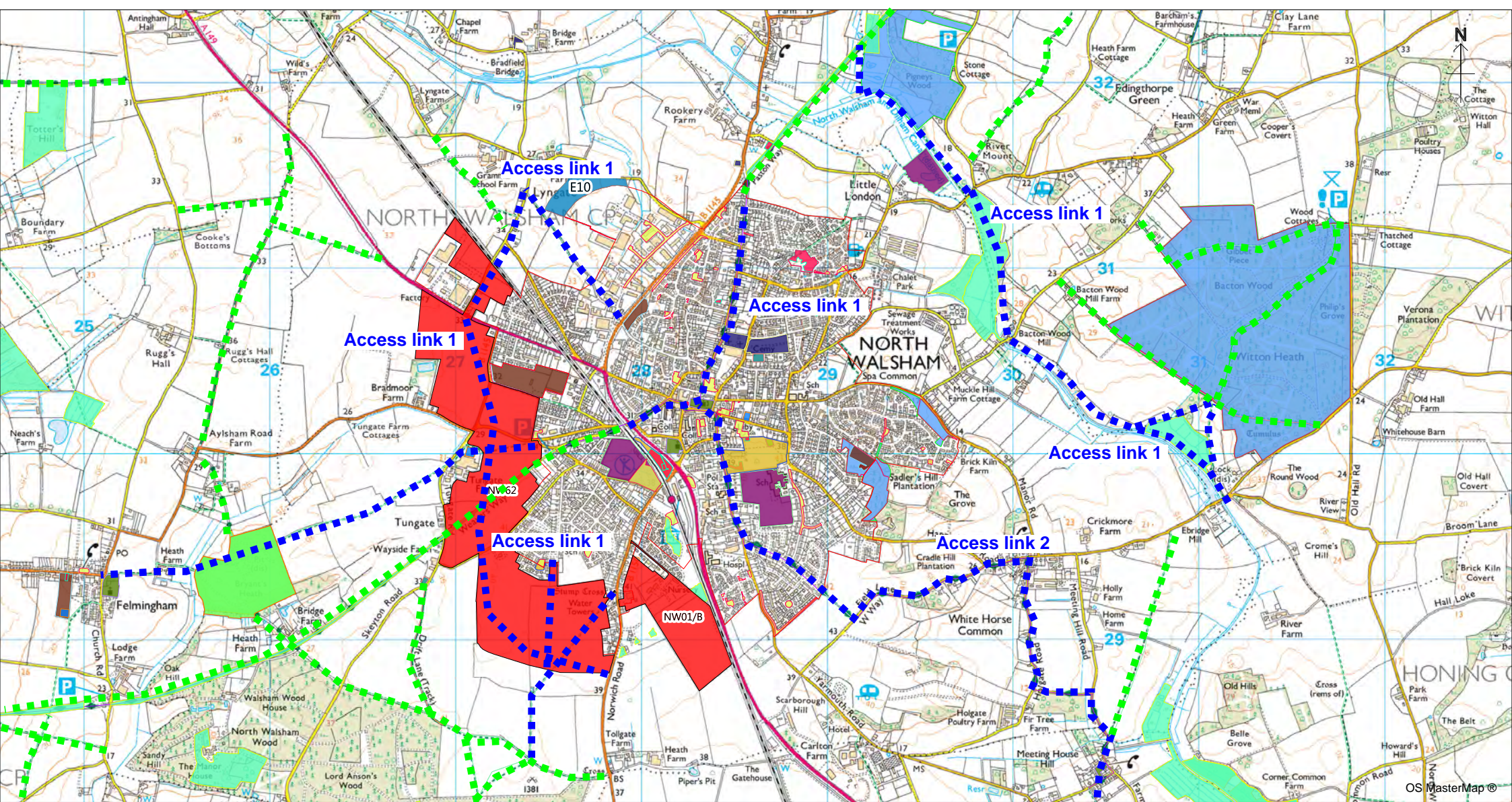
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# APPENDIX 6



## North Walsham Green Infrastructure - Access

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