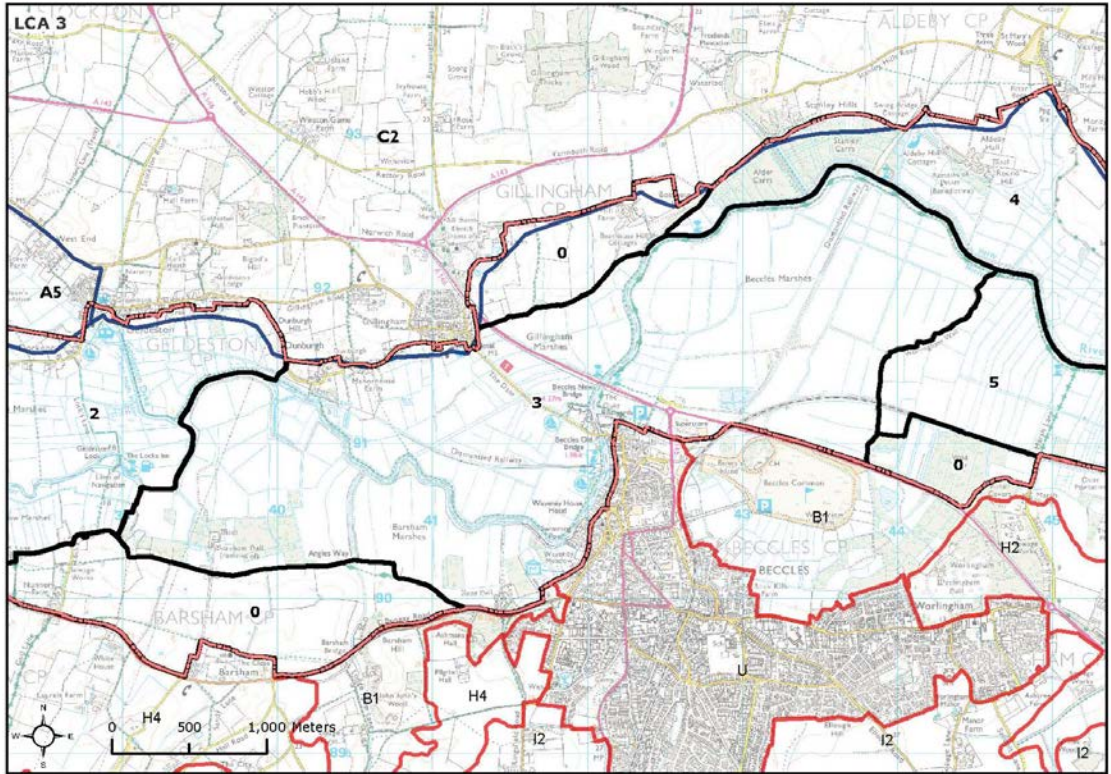


LCA 3: Waveney Valley - Barsham, Gillingham & Beccles Marshes

Location and landscape character context



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Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity	↔	Higher sensitivity
1.Scenic and special qualities			
	Special qualities sensitive to solar PV in this area relate mainly to aesthetic and perceptual character - the traditional vernacular valley town core at Beccles with associated prominent medieval stone built church tower, which would be sensitive in terms of materials to solar PV development. Also sensitive are the sense of tranquillity to the wider river valley floodplain and associated meandering course of the River Waveney and wetland habitat network, and the sense of space which would be vulnerable to solar PV development footprints.		
2.Sense of openness / enclosure			
	Areas of open floodplain in this character area would be sensitive to solar PV, due to impact of development footprint on this sense of openness. Areas where a more intimate character persists, with containment created by valley floor vegetation including pollard willows, and by valley topography, woodlands to the southern area boundary and the ridges in adjacent character areas beyond the Executive Area, would have a lower sensitivity. This is due to the potential of such landscape frameworks to assimilate solar PV, as smaller scale solar PV could potentially fit within such frameworks. Taking the above into account sensitivity to solar PV is moderate.		
3.Landscape and land cover pattern and scale			
	A mosaic landscape due to the interplay of grazing pasture, river and riparian habitat, flood meadow and historic valley settlements, in addition to small areas of carr woodland and orchards. The landscape contains a number of small scale references such as the landscape pattern near the settlements and the quayside at Beccles, together with the varied pattern of landscapes associated with the flood meadows. Such features would be vulnerable to solar PV development footprints. However, larger scale elements and erosions of the landscape pattern which create intrusions in character, such as pylons, reduce sensitivity to moderate-high.		
4.Perception and experience of the landscape			
	Areas of tranquil landscape within the valley floor such as flood meadows would be sensitive to solar PV due to their potential effect on cohesion of perceptual landscape character. Settlements are mostly of contained, compact and historic character. However intrusions such as the A146 corridor within the area, reduce landscape sensitivity, as do settlement edge influences – moderate-high sensitivity to solar PV in perceptual terms.		
5.Historic landscape character			
	A number of elements with this area would be sensitive to solar PV e.g. areas of fragmented dole patterns and traditional vernacular settlement such as historic valley towns. This is due to the effect that solar PV would potentially have on the cohesion and perception of such historic elements. Much of the landscape of this area is also defined by boundary loss which reduces historic landscape sensitivity, as do areas where more modern settlement fringe influences persist. Taking all of the above into account, sensitivity of historic landscape character to solar PV is moderate.		
6.Visual sensitivities and intervisibility			
	This area has intervisibility with a small part of the Waveney River Valley outside the Broads Authority Executive Area, and associated tributary valley farmlands which form the valley slopes (Waveney LCA H4: Mid Waveney Tributary Farmland), although a degree of visual filtering is provided by the woodland blocks on the southern boundary of the character area. Similarly the area is intervisible with the valley crests in South Norfolk District character area C2 Thurlton Tributary Farmland, with a more open visual character in this direction. The valley crests are therefore visually prominent and important. In places, views are filtered by the presence of		

	pollard willows lining water courses, creating visual foiling in relation to other Broads character areas within the Waveney Valley. Given the above and taken together, the area has a moderate sensitivity to solar PV in visual terms, although the more open areas of floodplain would be more sensitive in visual terms.
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Discussion on landscape sensitivity				
	Overall landscape sensitivity of the Waveney Valley – Barsham, Gillingham and Beccles Marshes to solar PV development is moderate. Whilst a number of scenic and special qualities sensitive to solar PV are present in this area, such as vernacular settlements and areas of open skies, overall landscape sensitivity is slightly reduced by intrusions such as the A146 corridor and line of pylons in the valley floor. The erosion of aspects of historic landscape character, such as boundary loss also influence this sensitivity judgement, as do areas of filtered visual character, to a degree. However, areas of more open floodplain landscape would have higher sensitivity to solar PV, given increased intervisibility.			

Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Land within the character areas		Land outside the Executive Area	
	Roof mounted requiring planning permission	M-H	Roof mounted requiring planning permission	M-H
	Roof mounted - < 1 hectare	M-H	Roof mounted - < 1 hectare	M-H
	Field mounted: Small - < 1 hectare	M	Field mounted: Small - < 1 hectare	M
	Field mounted: Medium - 1 to 5 hectares	M-H	Field mounted: Medium - 1 to 5 hectares	M-H
	<p>Commentary: The landscape of this area would be more sensitive to medium scale (multi field) solar arrays due to potential effect they would have on field patterns and landscape structure.</p> <p>Landscapes outside the Executive Area Relevant character areas and sensitivities are:</p> <p>Waveney District character area H4: Mid Waveney Tributary Farmland: Framed views to the Broads. South Norfolk District character area C2: Thurlton Tributary Farmland: Open views to the Broads.</p> <p>Fieldwork has confirmed that sensitivity ratings for this area would be the same as those set out for the Broads area above, due to level of visual containment, although much would be subject to siting, topography and level of intervisibility. The ridges in these adjacent character areas are visually prominent, as described above.</p>			