



Broads Authority
Local Plan
January 2017
Settlement Fringe Topic Paper

1. Introduction

Settlement fringe is a landscape type represents those areas of land found repeatedly throughout the Broads where settlement and semi natural/natural environment converge. Invariably around any settlement there are pressures for use other than for traditional agricultural. Many of these pressures are a generated as a direct result of increasing time for and range of recreational and leisure activities. Developments are varied and include garden extensions with their associated fencing and features; allotments; poultry keeping, horse keeping, sports pitches, pond construction (fishing and wildfowling) and storage of scrap items etc.

Additionally the proximity of a settlement can influence the presence and extent of strategic infrastructure such at the poles and cables for telecoms and electricity supply.

The land which is subject to these types of development pressure will generally have the basic underlying characteristics of the prevailing landscape type within the locality but invariably if used for such activities can become heavily modified though the annexation; subdivision; change of use; introduction of ancillary buildings and structures which meet the needs of the activity.

The changes effected on the areas of land which are subject to these activities can both individually (depending on their scale and nature) and cumulatively (if it is following a trend in an area) have an effect on the landscape character of an area, through changes to the traditional land use and land cover.

Many activities will require the submission of a planning application and as part of that process, consideration to their likely impacts on the landscape character of an area will be one of the many aspects that the planning authority will need to consider.

However, there are many areas in the Broads where traditional landscape features and elements are being eroded as a result of unauthorised and unsympathetic development.

2. Characteristics of Settlement Fringe

The distinctive landscape characteristics of this landscape type are that:

- the basic underlying landscape characteristics are the same as the prevailing landscape type within the character area i.e. estuarine marshland/ heathland etc;
- the basic landscape characteristics associated with the existing natural/ semi natural environment have been compromised;

- they are always located in close proximity to existing settlement;
- the landscape has been modified in some way to accommodate the intended use;
- features may have been added that look out of character with the semi natural environment of the Broads; and
- the activities have the potential to impact on the soils, vegetation, water quality and tranquillity of an area.

At certain locations within the Broads unauthorised activities have triggered the establishment of an Article 4 direction. This is a special planning regulation adopted by a Planning Authority to cover all or part of their executive area. It operates by removing permitted development rights from whatever is specified in the Article 4 direction. The Broads has a number of these article 4 directions within its boundaries.

3. Impacts on Settlement Fringe Landscape Character

Each of the activity types has the potential to effect landscape in different ways. They may cause direct impacts on both the landscape (soils water, vegetation etc.) and the perceptual qualities of an area including views. They may have the effect of urbanising the semi natural/natural environment. What follows are some examples of landscape issues which may have an adverse impact on the local landscape character.

Excavations for ponds for wildfowling /fishing etc.

- the shape, depth and profile of the excavations can look unnatural;
- pond edges not designed to support marginal plant species;
- material dug out is not disposed of in an appropriate manner;
- peat, which is a valuable landscape resource) is excavated;
- ancillary structures introduced to support the activity look out of character
- inappropriate planting

Garden extensions

- inappropriate ornamental planting introduced into a semi natural/natural environment
- layout, the materials used and manicured appearance can look out of character
- garden buildings, fencing and features can look out of character
- loss of natural/semi natural habitat

Horse keeping

- loss of natural/ semi natural habitat from changing in relation to grazing management and construction of ménages
- introduction of fencing can look out of character
- water quality – storage of bedding materials
- buildings for storage of feedstuffs and equipment
- stabling blocks
- lighting

Forces for change include

- An increase in housing development and therefore recreational / leisure time pressures within areas adjacent to the Broads
- An increase in horse ownership
- Land values which may dictate the economic viability of land use.
- Increasing popularity for coarse fishing

4. Evidence

The Broads Authority's Landscape Consultant undertook an assessment of the existing landscape type GIS data set (unpublished and unchecked) by comparing both map based and aerial imagery (provided by the Broads Authority). The original settlement fringe boundaries identified in the original dataset were either confirmed, amended or deleted and further areas were added. The work is based on map based information and local knowledge and was a desk based exercise.

The settlement fringe areas shown in the published plans at Appendix A were identified as a result of one or a combination of the following

- a landscape assessment process where particular types have development/activities have been noted;
- planning applications; and/or
- anticipated pressures or emerging trends for land change through professional judgement

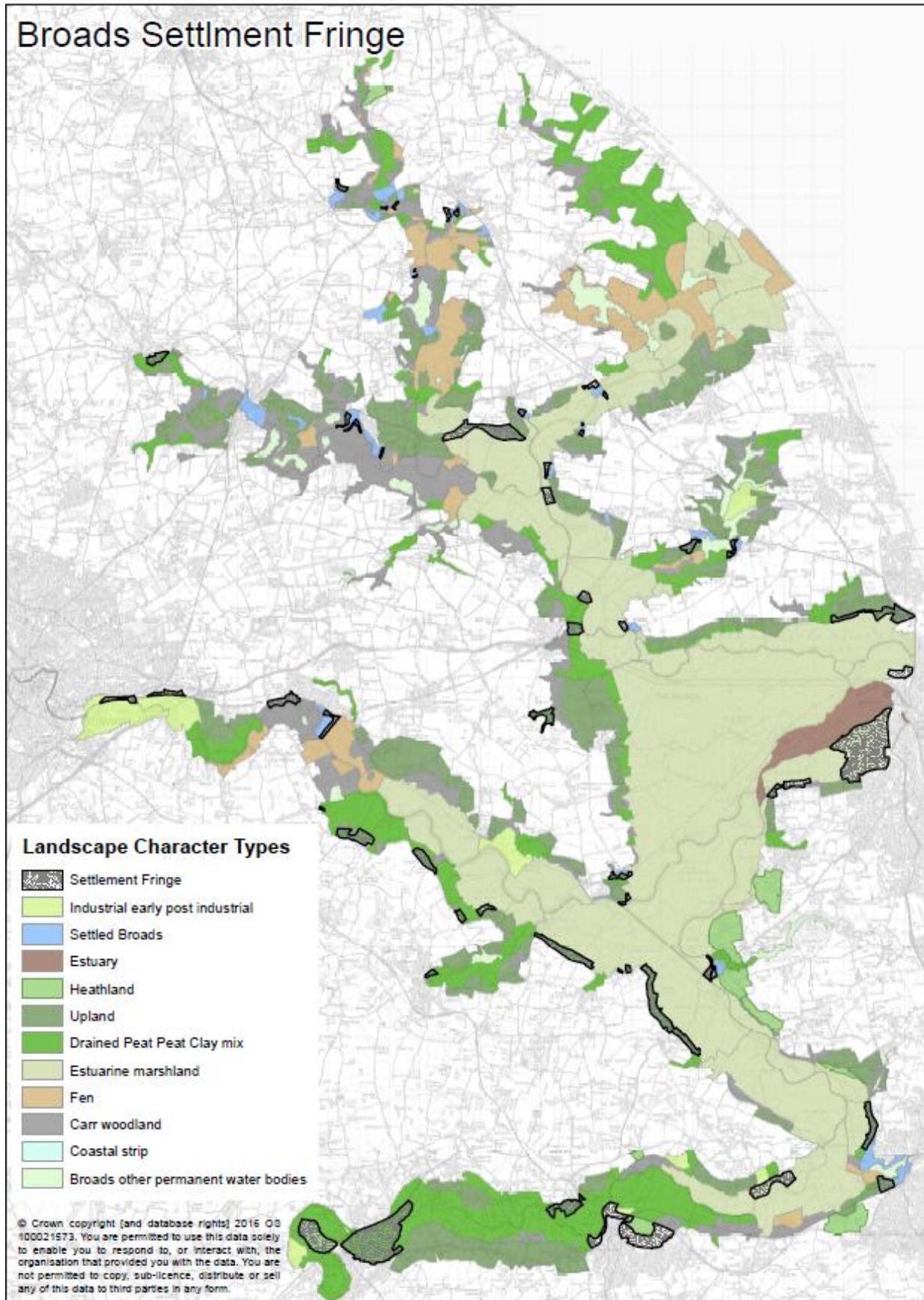
5. Policy Approach

The evidence shows that this is an issue in some particular areas and should be addressed through the Local Plan.

A Development Management style policy has been produced (at Appendix B). Using this policy, applications will be assessed on a case by case basis with reference to the maps but also the Landscape Character Assessment and landscape character more generally.

These areas have been reviewed against other policies in the Local Plan. Whilst some areas identified as Settlement Fringe at risk from development, the thrust of the policies that may cover the same area are generally in conformity with draft Settlement Fringe policy.

Appendix A: Map showing Settlement Fringe areas at particular risk.



Appendix B: Draft Preferred Options policy and justification

Policy PODM20: Protection and enhancement of settlement fringe landscape character

Proposals for development lying within settlement fringe areas shall be informed by and be sensitive to the distinctive characteristics and special qualities of the Broads landscape, and should contribute to the active conservation, enhancement and restoration of these landscapes.

Development shall be permitted where it can demonstrate that its location, scale and design (with particular regard to materials, and colour) will protect, conserve and where possible enhance:

- i) The special qualities, local distinctiveness and the natural beauty of the Broads (including its historical, biodiversity and cultural character).
- ii) The visual and historical relationship between settlements and their landscape settings.
- iii) The pattern of distinctive landscape elements such as dyke networks, woodland, trees (especially hedgerow trees), and field boundaries along with their function as ecological corridors.
- iv) Visually sensitive skylines significant views towards key landscape features such as drainage mills and/or important vistas.

Development shall also demonstrate that it will not as a result of cumulative and/or sequential landscape and visual effects of development detract from the natural beauty of the Broads and the experience of tranquillity.

Reasoned Justification

There are many areas in the Broads where traditional landscape features and elements are being eroded as a result of unauthorised and unsympathetic development.

Settlement fringe is a landscape type that represents those areas of land found repeatedly throughout the Broads, where settlement and semi natural/natural environment converge. Invariably around any settlement there are pressures for use other than for traditional agricultural. Many of these pressures are generated as a direct result of recreational and leisure activities. Developments can be varied and include garden extensions with their associated fencing and features; allotments; poultry keeping, horse keeping, sports pitches, pond construction (fishing and wildfowling) and storage of scrap items etc.

The distinctive landscape characteristics of this landscape type are that:

- a) the basic underlying landscape characteristics are the same as the prevailing landscape type within the character area, i.e. estuarine marshland/ heathland, etc.;
- b) the basic landscape characteristics associated with the existing natural/ semi natural environment have been compromised;
- c) they are always located in close proximity to existing settlement;
- d) the landscape has been modified in some way to accommodate the intended use;
- e) features may have to be added that look out of character with the semi natural environment of the Broads; and
- f) the activities have the potential to impact on the soils, vegetation, water quality and tranquillity of an area.

Additionally the proximity of a settlement can influence the presence and extent of strategic infrastructure, such as the poles and cables for telecoms and electricity supply.

The land that is subject to these types of development pressure will generally have the basic underlying characteristics of the prevailing landscape type within the locality, but invariably if used for such activities can become heavily modified through the annexation, subdivision, change of use, or introduction of ancillary buildings and structures that meet the needs of the activity.

The changes on the areas of land that are subject to these activities can both individually (depending on their scale and nature) and cumulatively (if it is following a trend in an area) have an effect on the landscape character of an area through changes to the traditional land use and land cover. The landscape character of an area is determined by distinct and recognisable patterns of both elements, or by characteristics (both physical, e.g. topography, soils water quality vegetation, etc., and perceptual, e.g. visual, sound, time depth, tranquillity, etc.) that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Many activities will require the submission of a planning application. As part of that process, consideration as to their likely impacts on the landscape character of an area will be one of the many aspects the planning authority will need to consider.

Each of the activities (see below for examples) has the potential to affect landscape in different ways. They may cause direct impacts on both the landscape (soils, water, vegetation, etc.) and the perceptual qualities of an area, including views. They may have the effect of urbanising the semi natural/natural environment. The following are examples of landscape issues that may have an adverse impact on the local landscape character.

Excavations for ponds for wildfowling/fishing, etc.:

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- Increasing popularity for coarse fishing

Comments received as part of the Issues and Options consultation:

General support for addressing this but would be a need to take different types of development into consideration due to the varying degrees potential landscape impact.

Alternative Options and Sustainability Appraisal Summary

- **Preferred Option:** Positive against some environment criteria. A ? against the rural economy as some development on the settlement fringe in the past had an economic element (as well as recreation) such as horsiculture. The policy does not stop change, but sets criteria that proposals should address.
- **No policy:** Not having a policy does not mean that these issues would not be addressed as the Broads is a nationally protected landscape. The policy is drafted to reflect ongoing practice and emerging themes from determining planning applications.

Evidence used to inform this section

- Officer knowledge and experience.

Monitoring Indicators

- Applications permitted contrary to Landscape Architect advice.