

Broads Local Plan Dark Skies topic Paper

January 2024

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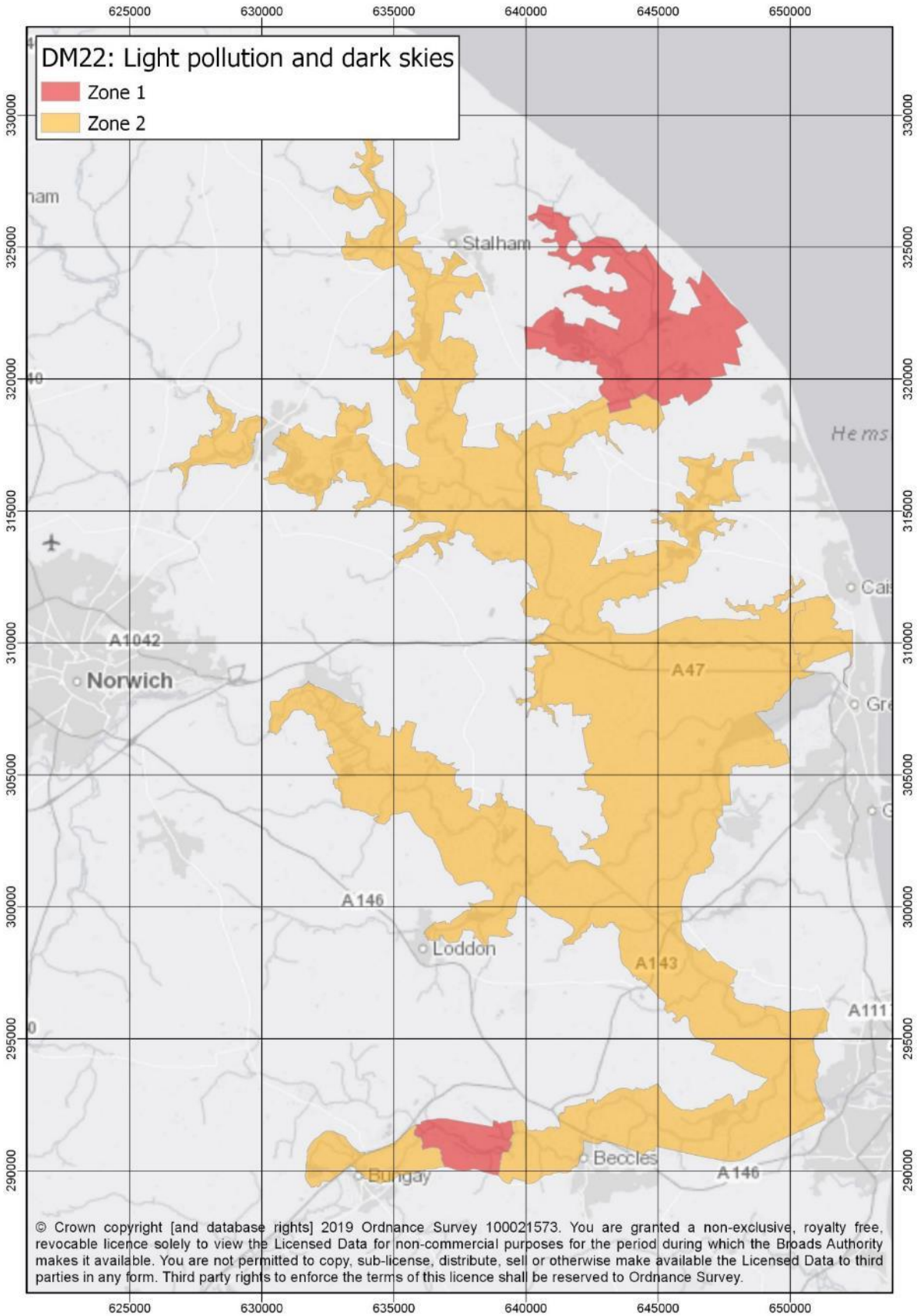
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1. Introduction

The Broads Authority has surveyed the dark skies of the Broads Authority Executive Area; the aim being to understand the quality of the dark skies in the Broads. The [2015/16 survey](#) identified that the Broads has intrinsically dark skies that need protecting. Indeed, a policy was included in the adopted Local Plan. Now that the Authority are reviewing the Local Plan, it is prudent to check that there are still dark skies of the Broads. This note provides detail on previous surveys as well as the sample testing of some sites in 2023.

2. Assessment of the dark skies of the Broads – 2015/16

Between October 2015 to March 2016 survey, 440 survey points around the Broads, on land and on water, were surveyed. The darkest areas were around the Hickling Broad and Heigham Holmes area as well as between Beccles and Bungay on the river Waveney. At the same time that the Authority were surveying by ‘looking up’, CPRE undertook work ‘looking down’ - [England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies Map \(cpre.org.uk\)](#). [The Dark Skies Topic Paper](#) explains in more detail the process and the findings and also combines the CPRE work with the Authority’s work. The dark skies map below was produced and subsequently included in the adopted Local Plan.



3. CPRE Night Blight data

The other evidence ([Night Blight](#)) was completed by the CPRE in 2016 and used satellites to assess the light pollution around the whole country, by looking down at the earth. More information can be found here: [EB6-Assessment-of-Night-Blight-and-Dark-Skies-Survey-Data.pdf \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](#).

4. Assessment of How Hill and St Benet's Abbey, 2021

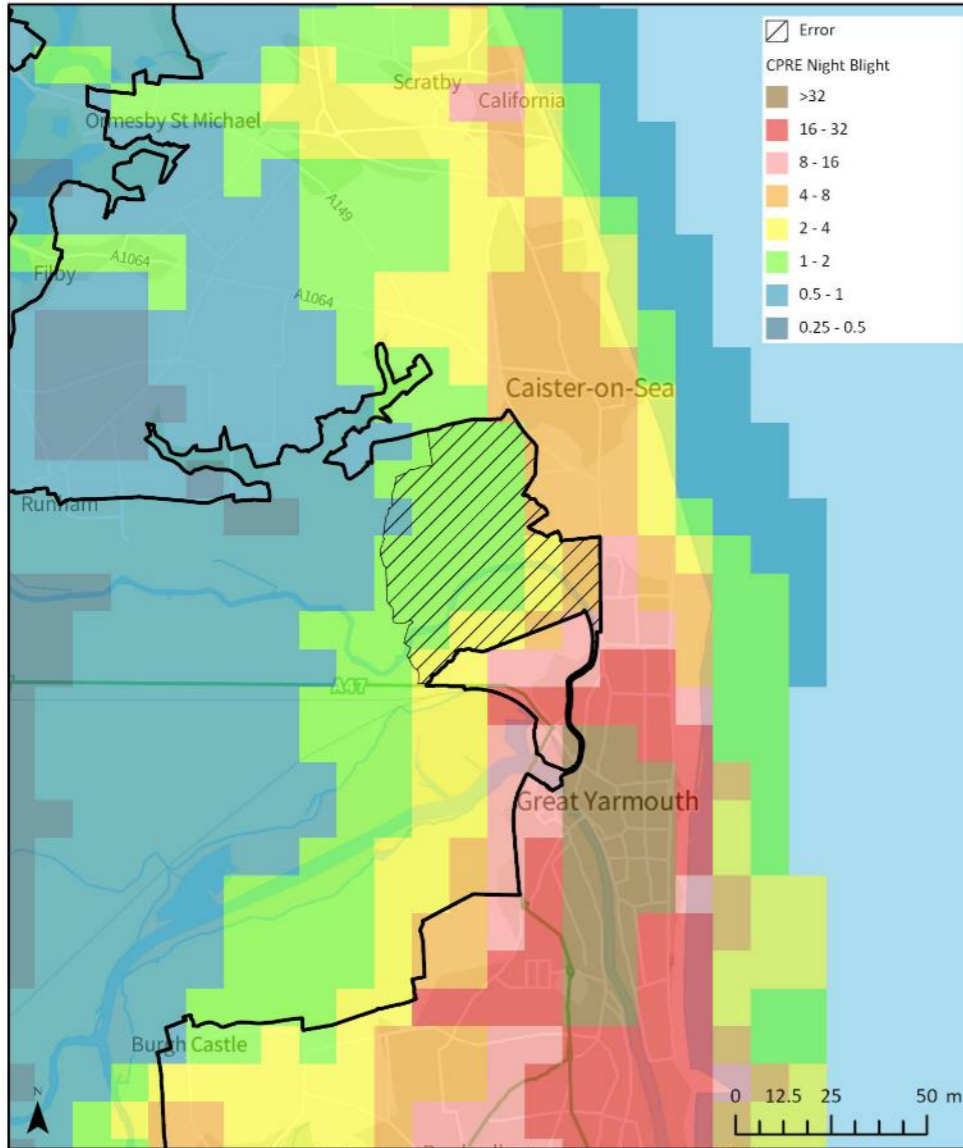
As part of the potential application for [Dark Sky Discovery Sites](#), some readings were taken in April 2021 at How Hill and St Benet's Abbey. These have been taken into consideration as part of the update/check of the dark skies of the Broads. The application was subsequently not progressed due to the scheme being paused because of resourcing issues.

5. Sampled assessment of the darkest areas of the Broads, 2023

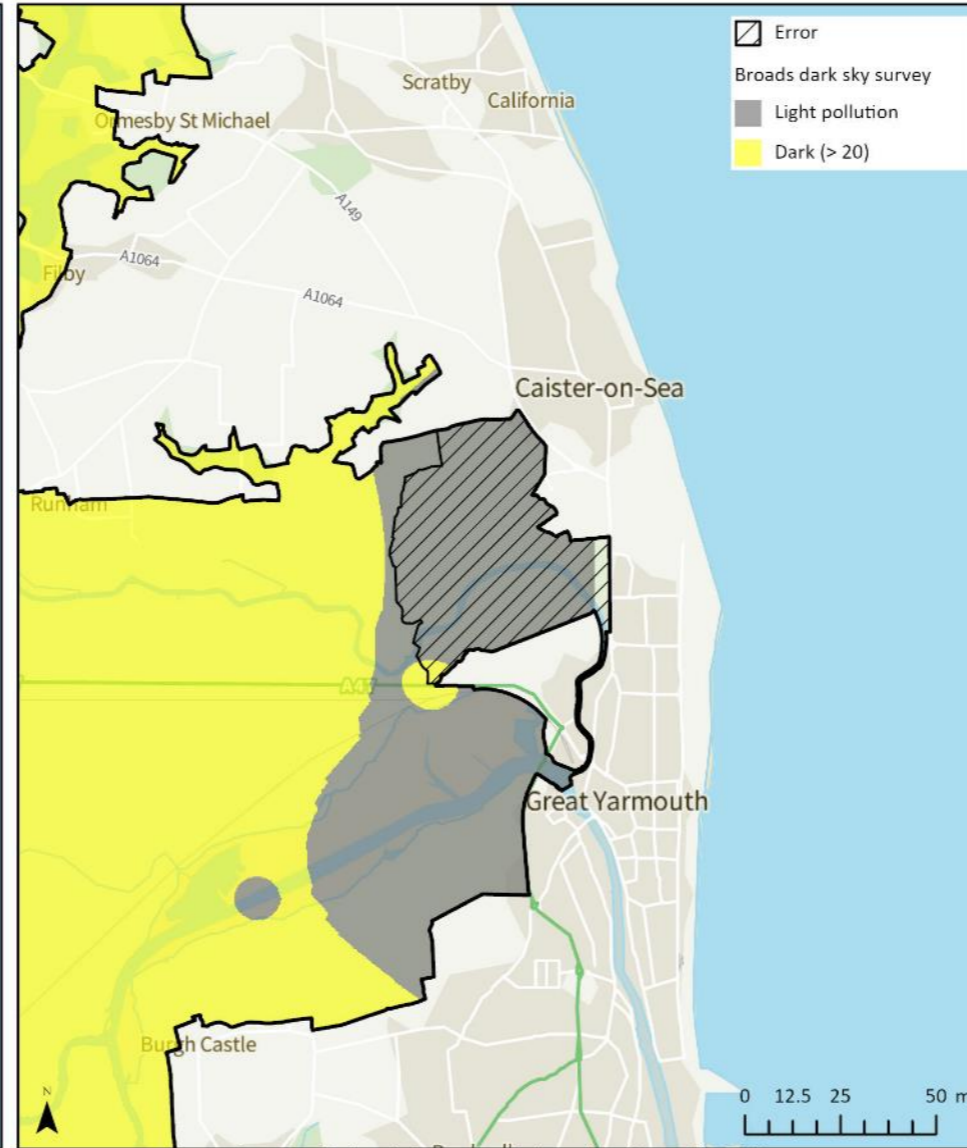
As part of the review of the Local Plan for the Broads, the Authority sample tested some survey points around the darkest areas of the Broads. The 2015/16, 2021 and 2023 data were mapped and compared with the CPRE work (as described previously). This work generally found that the readings were consistent with the 2015/16 survey.

6. Correction of error

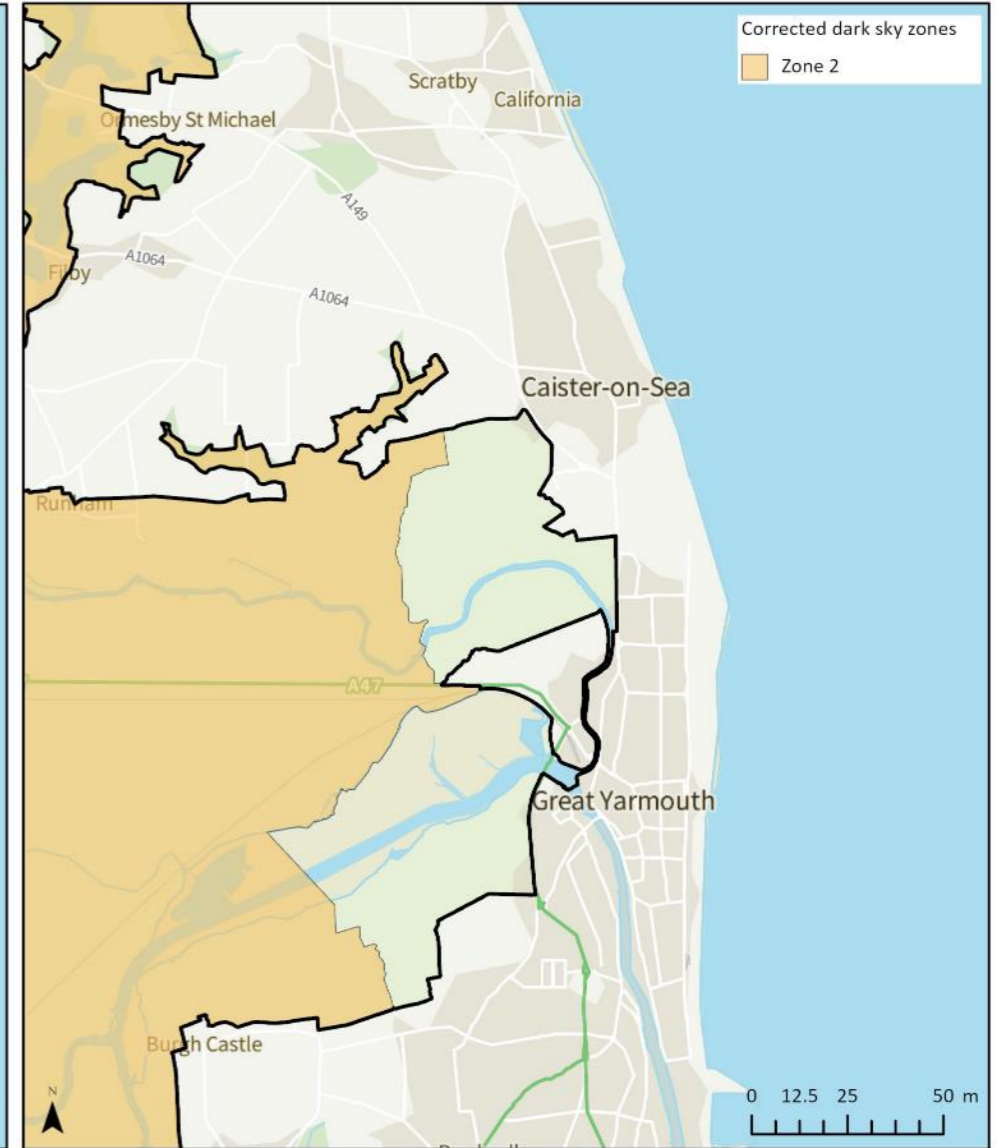
In the Local Plan for the Broads, an area near to Great Yarmouth is incorrectly classed as zone 2. The maps on the following pages show that according to our 2015/16 survey and the CPRE data, this area is not above 20 magnitudes per arc second and therefore should not be zone 2. The map at the end of this document corrects this error.



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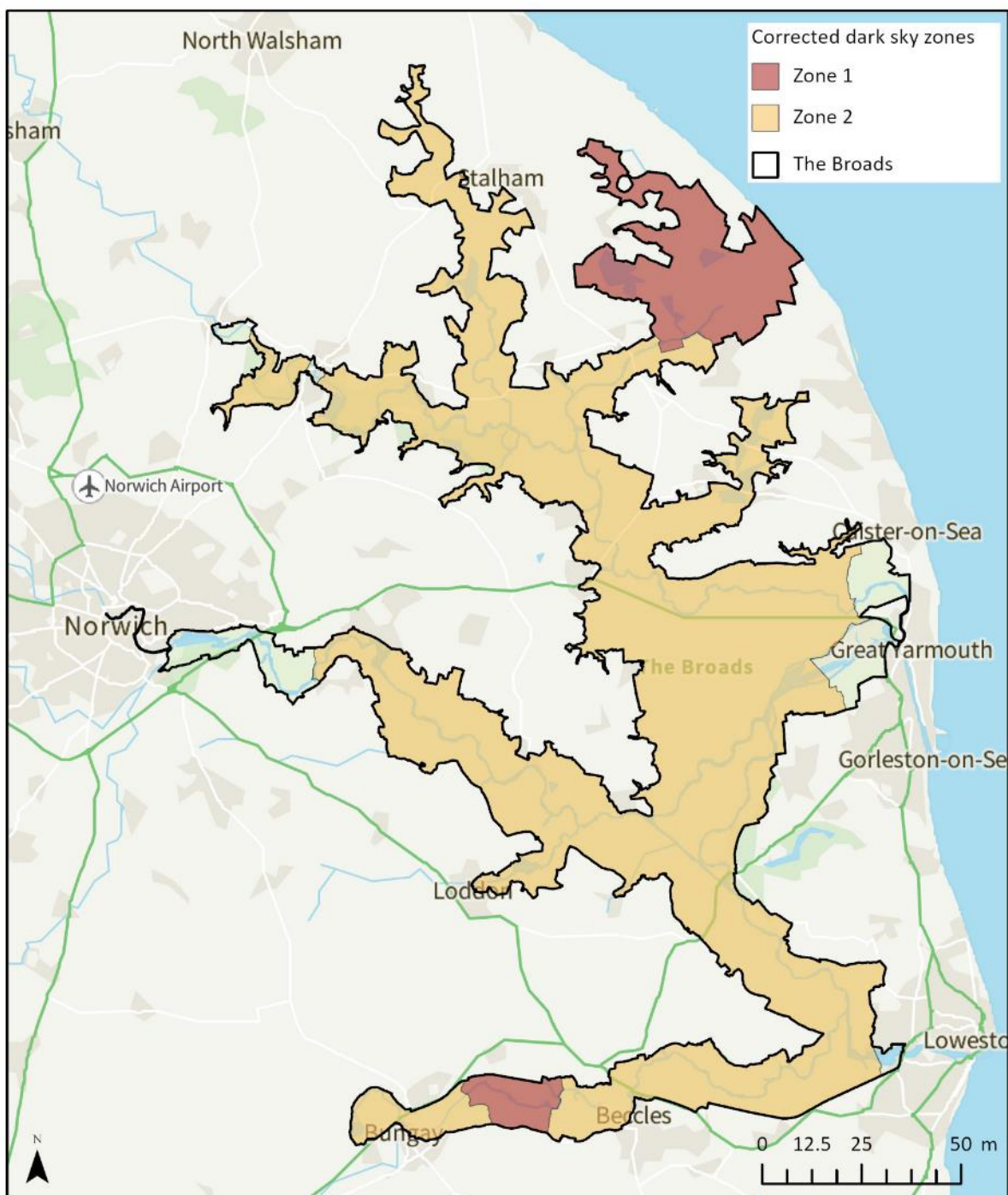
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7. Summary and conclusion

The Broads still has intrinsically dark skies which need to be protected. An amended policy is included in the Local Plan with the up-to-date data presented on a map. The Authority will continue to seek to protect the dark skies of the Broads.



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