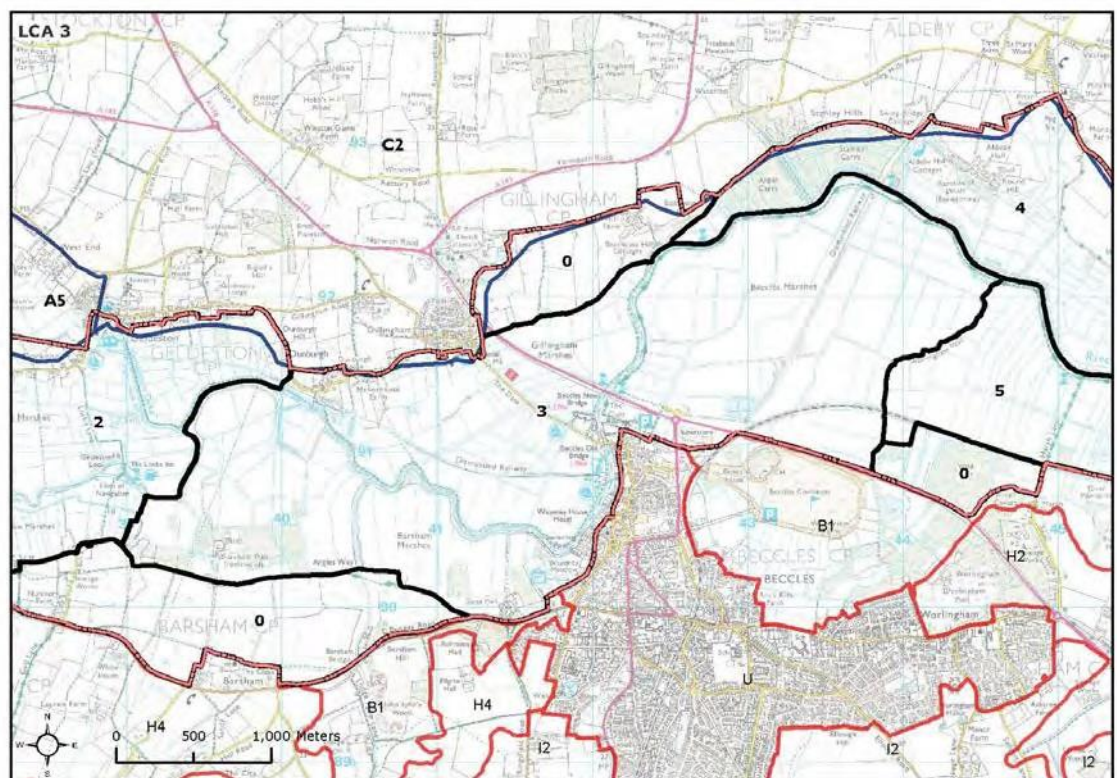


LCA 3: Waveney Valley - Barsham, Gillingham & Beccles Marshes

Location and landscape character context



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Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wind Turbines

| Criteria | Lower sensitivity | | Higher sensitivity |
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| 1.Scenic and special qualities | <p>Special qualities sensitive to turbines 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 to large scale modern development such as wind turbines. Also sensitive are the sense of tranquillity to the wider river valley floodplain (due to potential impact of moving tall structures) and associated meandering course of the River Waveney and wetland habitat network. Areas of open skies would be sensitive due to potential impact of turbines on the perception of this.</p> | | |
| 2.Enclosure and scale | <p>A well-defined valley landscape of small to medium scale, with enclosure created by pollard willows to the river and associated water courses, and by valley topography, woodlands to the southern area boundary and the ridges in adjacent character areas beyond the Executive Area. Small scale landscape patterns are apparent to settlement edges, whilst human scale elements are imparted by sailing boats using the river. All of these elements combine to create a landscape which is sensitive to large scale elements such as wind turbines.</p> | | |
| 3.Landscape and land cover pattern | <p>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 human scale references such as waterside pollard willows, the historic settlement of Beccles, its quayside and boats (associated with the navigable Waveney), and the church tower, all of which indicate higher sensitivity to turbines, as they create human scale elements in the landscape, the legibility of which would potentially be affected by wind turbines. However, larger scale elements of the landscape pattern such as pylons reduce sensitivity slightly – moderate-high overall.</p> | | |
| 4.Skylines | <p>Skylines are mostly uninterrupted and undeveloped (high voltage pylons are however visible in parts, reducing skyline sensitivity). Horizons are formed by valley sides in adjacent landscape character areas, and comprise small woodland blocks and occasional small settlement edge development, although the settlement edge at Beccles forms part of the horizon to the south (including prominent church tower). This is predominantly of vernacular character and of a scale and type which would be sensitive. Taller skyline elements such as pylons locally reduce landscape sensitivity – moderate-high overall.</p> | | |
| 5.Perception and experience of the landscape | <p>Areas of tranquil landscape within the valley floor such as flood meadows would be sensitive to turbines 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, locally reduce landscape sensitivity, as do tall elements such as pylons – moderate high sensitivity to turbines in perceptual terms.</p> | | |
| 6.Historic landscape character | <p>A number of elements with this area would be sensitive to turbines e.g. areas of fragmented dole patterns and traditional vernacular settlement such as historic valley towns. This is due to the effect that turbines would</p> | | |

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| | potentially have on scale and cohesion/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 wind turbines is moderate. | | | |
| 7. Visual sensitivities and intervisibility with areas outside the Broads | | | | |
| | 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. Taking this varied visual character into account, the landscape has a moderate sensitivity to turbines in visual terms. | | | |
| Discussion on landscape sensitivity | | | | |
| | <p>Overall landscape sensitivity of the Waveney Valley – Barsham, Gillingham and Beccles Marshes to wind turbine development is moderate-high. Whilst a number of scenic and special qualities sensitive to turbines 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, and associated impacts on scale, also influence this sensitivity judgement.</p> <p>This judgement also applies to large infrastructure for off shore wind farm schemes, such as pylons.</p> | | | |
| Sensitivity to different turbine heights | Land within the character areas | | Land outside the Executive Area | |
| | Small (15-20m) | M-H | Small (15-20m) | M-H |
| | Medium (20-50m) | H | Medium (20-50m) | H |
| | Large (50-70m) | H | Large (50-70m) | H |
| | Very large (70m+) | H | Very large (70m+) | H |
| | <p>Commentary: Turbines at the smallest end of the range (15-20 metres to tip height) would have less effect on perceptual landscape character as they are closer in scale to existing landscape elements and existing vertical skyline features such as church towers. Turbines beyond this height range would introduce elements out of scale with the landscape, hence the higher sensitivity rating.</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>Turbines at the smallest end of the range (15-20 metres to tip height) would have less effect on landscape character and perceptual aspects within the Broads, due to closer relationship to existing landscape scale elements. However, fieldwork confirms that the relative prominence of the valley sides and ridges in these adjacent areas means that larger turbines would appear</p> | | | |
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| | more dominant in relation to the Broads, resulting in a high landscape sensitivity. | | | |
| Commentary on different cluster sizes <i>Single turbine</i> <i>Small clusters (<5 turbines)</i> <i>Medium (6-10)</i> <i>Large (11-25)</i> <i>Very large (>26)</i> | Land within the character areas | | Land outside the Executive Area | |
| | Single turbine | M-H | Single turbine | M-H |
| | <5 turbines | H | <5 turbines | H |
| | 6-10 turbines | H | 6-10 turbines | H |
| | 11-25 turbines | H | 11-25 turbines | H |
| | >26 turbines | H | >26 turbines | H |
| | Commentary: Single turbines would confine the introduction of visual clutter in this simple valley landscape. <i>Landscapes outside the Executive Area</i> Relevant character areas and sensitivities are: 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. Fieldwork confirms that the relative prominence of the valley sides and ridges in these adjacent areas as they overlook the Broads means that multiple turbine clusters could be more dominant in relation to skyline character and intervisibility, resulting in a high landscape sensitivity. | | | |