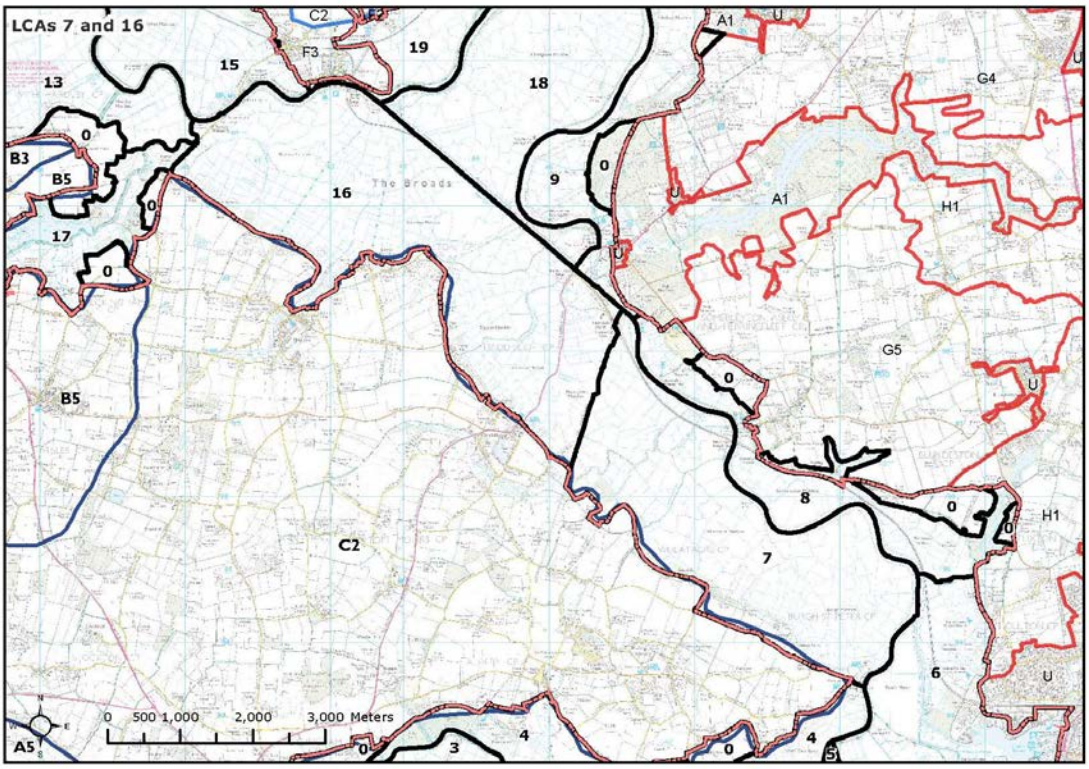
LCA 7: Waveney Valley – Burgh St. Peter to Haddiscoe Marshes: LCA 16: Yare and Waveney Valley - Norton Marshes to Haddiscoe Dismantled Railway

Location and landscape character context



Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity	⟷	Higher sensitivity
1.Scenic and special qualities	The character areas in this grouping are representative of the Broads special qualities which would be sensitive to solar PV. For example, both areas are defined by a wide, open landscape of big skies. This and the associated sense of space would potentially be affected by the introduction of solar PV development. There are however areas which reduce sensitivity where visual clutter is already apparent (pylons at Thurlton Marshes). Both areas have a sense of tranquillity, which solar PV would affect through development footprint, land take and introduction of additional man-made elements resulting in further visual intrusion. The potential perceptual impacts on recreational users of the river also indicate a degree of sensitivity due to the interest users have in their landscape. As a result the character areas have a high sensitivity to solar PV with regard to special qualities.		
2.Sense of openness / enclosure	The open visual character created by the marshland landscapes would be highly sensitive to solar PV in view of the potential for visual intrusion of such structures and impacts on sense of space which would be sensitive to solar PV. The large scale field pattern where areas of extensive field boundary removal has taken place (e.g. surrounding the New Cut) indicate a lower sensitivity. However, without any visual filtering being provided by vegetation, development in these areas would be highly apparent, and as such these marshes are sensitive to solar PV. As a result of the above, these areas are considered to have a high sensitivity to solar PV development.		
3.Landscape and land cover pattern and scale	Both character areas for the most part have a simple character, particularly in area 7, where the presence of open marshland provides little variation in land cover or pattern. There is however some variation on the southern edges of the area where the wooded valley edges provide greater visual interest and as such create a more sensitive landscape to solar PV in terms of pattern. Overall the areas have a moderate sensitivity to solar PV development due to the potential of development footprint to change the cohesiveness of the curvilinear dyke pattern found within area 16, although the simple character of both areas reduces sensitivity in terms of land cover and pattern.		
4.Perception and experience of the landscape	The tranquil character created in these areas by expansive, open and predominantly undeveloped marshland would be highly sensitive to solar PV, due to the perceptual change such structures would introduce. Localised intrusions such as the Cantley Factory complex and pylons on Thurlton Marshes reduce sensitivity although the area as a whole is judged to have a moderate-high sensitivity.		
5.Historic landscape character	The small scale 17th century enclosures created by the network of curvilinear dykes within area 7 would be sensitive to solar PV developments due to the potential effect on the coherence of this historic landscape pattern. However there are large areas where the historic pattern has been eroded and this reduces sensitivity. Area 16 possesses some notable historic features which are visually prominent and whose visual and cultural setting would be sensitive to introduction of further development such as		

	solar PV, e.g. church tower at St Peter's Staithe and steam engine house at Burgh Marshes. Given the above, these areas have a moderate-high sensitivity to solar PV in historic landscape character terms.
6.Visual sensitivities and intervisibility	The areas of open marshland character and the level of intervisibility with areas within the Broads (6, 8 and 16) and those in adjacent districts (areas A1, G4 and G5 in Waveney District and area C2 in South Norfolk District) would indicate a higher sensitivity to solar PV development. Although views towards adjacent areas are often contained by wooded ridges (i.e. north and south of area 7 and to the east of area 16) these adjacent areas influence the character of the Broads and this degree of intervisibility indicates a higher sensitivity to solar PV development. The areas have an overall high sensitivity as a result of the degree of intervisibility, distant views and the potential of adjacent character areas to influence the visual character of the Broads areas.
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Overall landscape sensitivity of this area grouping to solar PV development is high. This is due to the representation of special qualities sensitive to solar PV in these areas, specifically the sense of tranquillity, wide open landscape, sense of space and big skies which characterise many parts of the areas. Other important characteristics of these landscapes which contribute to this sensitivity rating in relation to solar PV, are the open visual character of the marshland landscapes in these areas, and associated intervisibility with adjacent landscapes, including with those in adjacent local authorities beyond the Executive Area. Also important in relation to this sensitivity judgement are the historic landscape pattern, such as small scale curvilinear dykes, and prominent historic assets such as wind pumps at Herringfleet, the church tower at St Peter's Staithe and steam engine house at Burgh Marshes.

Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development

Land within the character areas		Land outside the Executive Area	
Roof mounted requiring planning permission	H	Roof mounted requiring planning permission	M-H
Roof mounted - < 1 hectare	H	Roof mounted - < 1 hectare	H
Field mounted: Small - < 1 hectare	H	Field mounted: Small - <1 hectare	M-H
Field mounted: Medium - 1 to 5 hectares	H	Field mounted: Medium - 1 to 5 hectares	H

Commentary:

Roof mounted and field mounted solar PV of all sizes in the typology would have the potential to exacerbate impacts on perceptual characteristics of these areas and associated special qualities such as sense of space and tranquillity, and in terms of views and intervisibility across these landscapes. Therefore landscape sensitivity of these character areas to all solar PV typologies is high.

Landscapes outside the Executive Area

Relevant character areas and sensitivities:

South Norfolk -

C2 Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland: Views open out to the Broads where land rises up from the low lying Waveney Valley.

Great Yarmouth and Waveney -

G4: Hobland Settled Farmland: Site work confirmed that the escarpment at Burgh Castle is a prominent ridge which provides views out into the Broads.

	G5: Somerleyton Settled Farmland: Some long views across the adjacent low lying pasture and wetland landscape of the Broads and reciprocal views back with this area. Due to levels of intervisibility, sensitivity ratings for larger scale solar PV schemes are generally the same as for the Broads. There would however be slightly lower sensitivity to the smallest scale (roof mounted) and small scale field mounted solar arrays, although this would depend entirely on orientation in relation to the Broads.