

Hoxne Neighbourhood Development Plan

Supporting Document 7 – Landscape

National Planning Policy Framework.

1. The NPPF deals with landscape and states:
 174. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 175. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework⁵⁸; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Mid Suffolk Local Plan

2. The current local plan contains policies that protect certain landscape types. The typology is found in the following documents:
 - a. Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment 2010
 - b. Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Landscape Guidance 2015
3. The Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment (BMSDCs 2018) is another part of the new Joint Local Plan evidence base and contains comments on landscape in a heritage context.
4. Hoxne is within the Rolling Valley Claylands Landscape Character type 17 - see page 85 of b above. Some of the Parish is within the Plateau Claylands Type 10 (page 80) and Wooded valley Meadowlands and Fens Type 31 (Page 105). There is advice about the treatment of new development for each character type.
5. The pre submission draft of the Joint Local Plan (Nov 2020) moves away from policies protecting particular landscape types to an asset based approach that requires intrinsic character to be assessed in line with the new NPPG quoted above. Para 15.22 notes the important inter relationship between the landscape and the historic environment:

‘15.22 The landscape and the historic environment have a strong interrelationship, as the character of the landscape is influenced by its historic environment, as well as traditional villages and historic townscapes. Equally, the landscape can be important to the setting of a historic asset.’

6. Para 24 notes the assessments of character areas and that ‘They will be used as a basis to guide decisions about whether development is appropriate in the landscape and provide a framework for the provision of appropriate landscape mitigation and enhancement.’ Policy LP19 is the landscape policy:

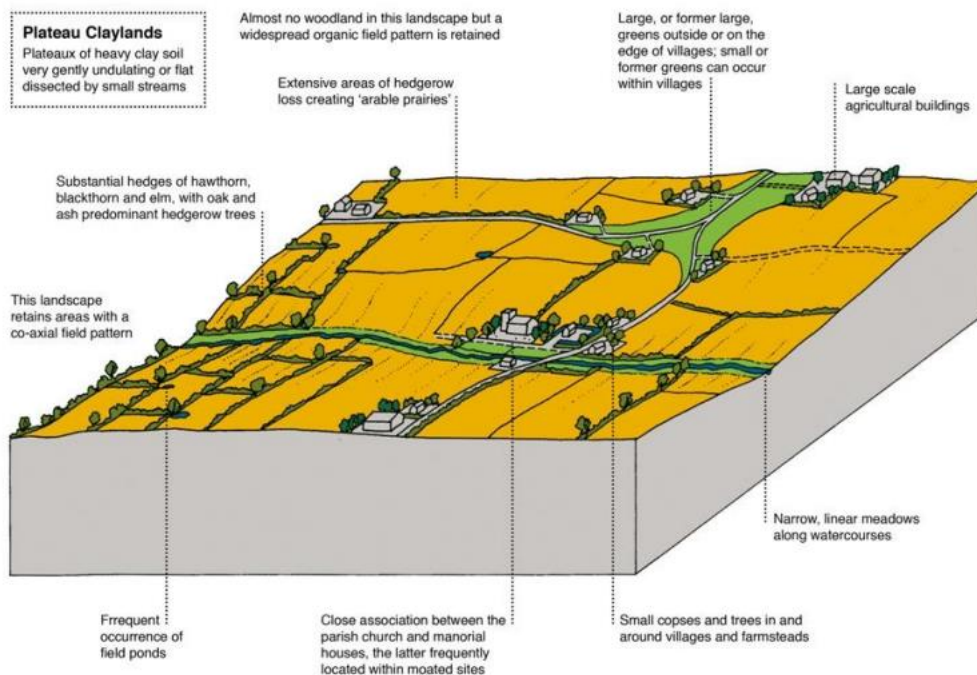
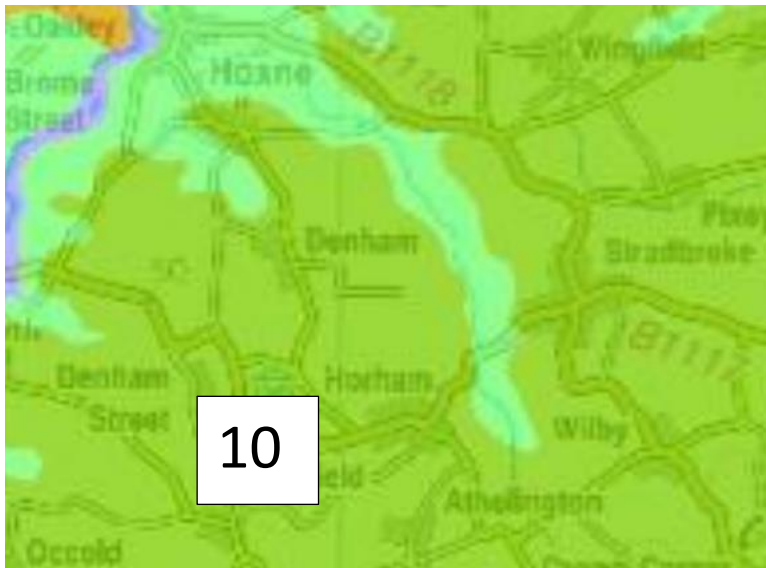
Policy LP19 - Landscape

1. To protect and enhance landscape character development must:
 - a. Integrate positively with the existing landscape character of the area and reinforce the local distinctiveness and identity of individual settlements.
 - b. Proposals must be sensitive to their landscape and visual amenity impacts (including on dark skies and tranquil areas); subject to siting, design, lighting, use of materials and colour, along with the associated mitigation measures;
 - c. Enhance and protect landscape character and values and heritage assets such as; locally characteristic landscape features, for example by use of materials which complement the local individual landscape character, archaeological and historic patterns of settlement and land use³⁷ and designations; being demonstrably informed by local guidance, in particular the Council’s Joint Landscape Guidance, the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment.
 - d. Consider the topographical cumulative impact on landscape sensitivity.
2. Where significant landscape or visual impacts are likely to occur, for example for larger development proposals, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) or Landscape Appraisal should be prepared. This should identify ways of avoiding, reducing and mitigating any adverse effects and opportunities for enhancement.

Character Areas

7. The Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Landscape Guidance 2015 provides the following details about the areas within Hoxne Parish:

a. Character Area 10 – Plateau Claylands



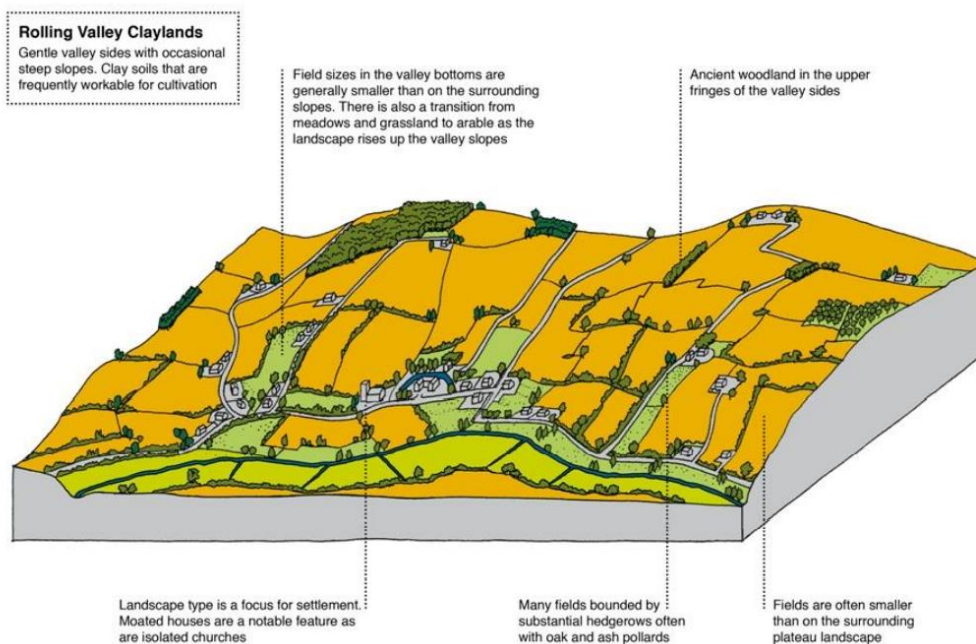
8. The definition is:

'A gently rolling heavy clay plateau with sparse woodland cover and some extensive areas of post WWII field boundary loss - This landscape character covers a large area in central north Suffolk from Great Ashfield and Walsham-le-Willows across the district border into Suffolk Coastal and extending down to the edge of the Gipping valley. This landscape type covers the majority of the district and is the core landscape of the High Suffolk and south Norfolk National Character Area.'

9. Key Design Principles are:

- I. Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained.
- II. Retain rural character of the small settlements and conservation areas by avoiding the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials and features.
- III. Restore, maintain and enhance green and woodland areas. I
- IV. Hedging for boundaries will be designed to reflect the local planting scheme to reduce visual impact on the distinctive character of the area.
- V. To maintain the character and condition of the landscape any major developments will enter into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for on and off site landscaping including enhancing field boundaries with local hedging and tree species.

Character Area 17 – Rolling Valley Claylands

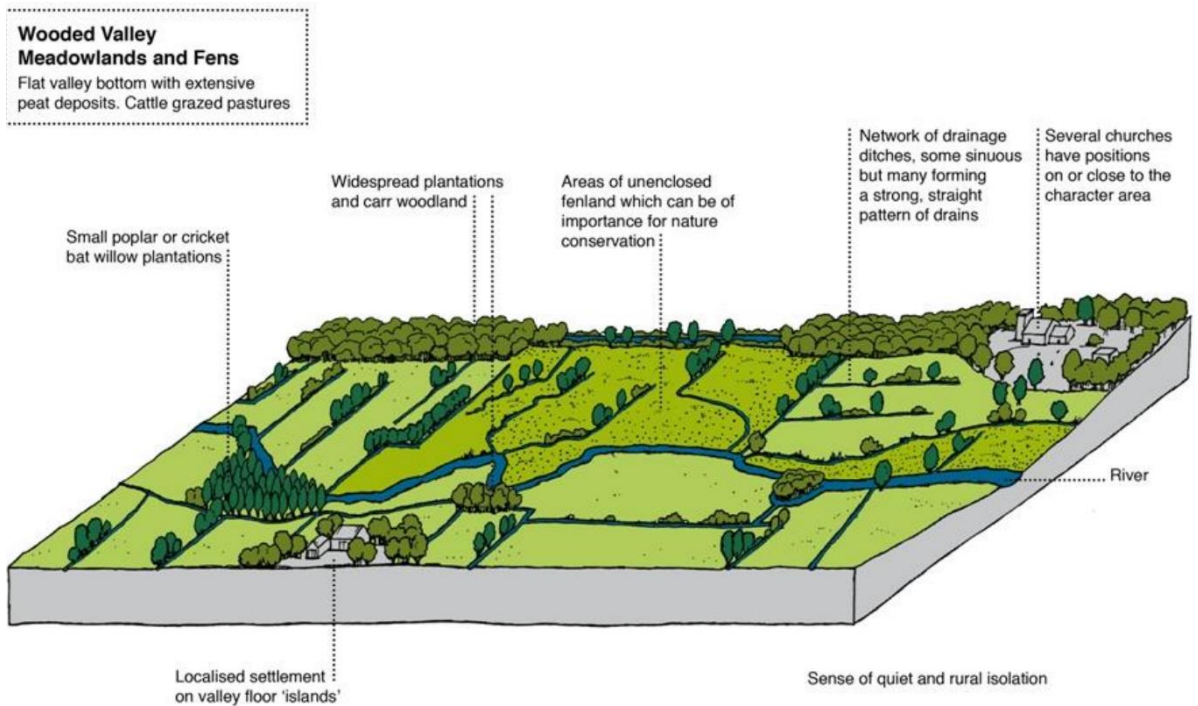


10. It is noted that ‘New development within this landscape character is likely to have a significant impact on both the character and visual amenity of valley floor and valley side’. The Key Design Principles are:

- I. Due to the rolling landscape development in this area is considered to have a significant visual impact. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the potential visual impact on Conservation Areas.
- II. Reinforce the parkland and village green features in new developments.
- III. Woodlands are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.

Character Type 31 – Wooded Valleys Meadowlands and Fens





11. The description is:

'This landscape consists of damp flat valley floors largely dominated by grassland, with pockets of small carr woodlands and willow plantations. Any changes or developments will have a significant effect on the landscape therefore all proposals should provide mitigation strategies to minimise the detrimental impact on both the visual amenity and the landscape character of the valley floor'.

12. The Key Design Principles are:

- I. Any changes or developments will have a significant effect on the landscape therefore all proposals should provide mitigation strategies to minimise the detrimental impact on both the visual amenity and the landscape character of the valley floor
- II. All development must take into consideration the cultural and historic importance of this area and the impact on the ecological environment
- III. Alder carrs and woodland plantations are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- IV. Fens, marshes and pasture areas are to be protected and maintained within this landscape character.
- V. Roofscapes are to be in keeping with existing development within this very sensitive landscape.
- VI. Retains the undisturbed scenic and tranquil quality of the hidden Wooded Valley Meadowlands Landscape

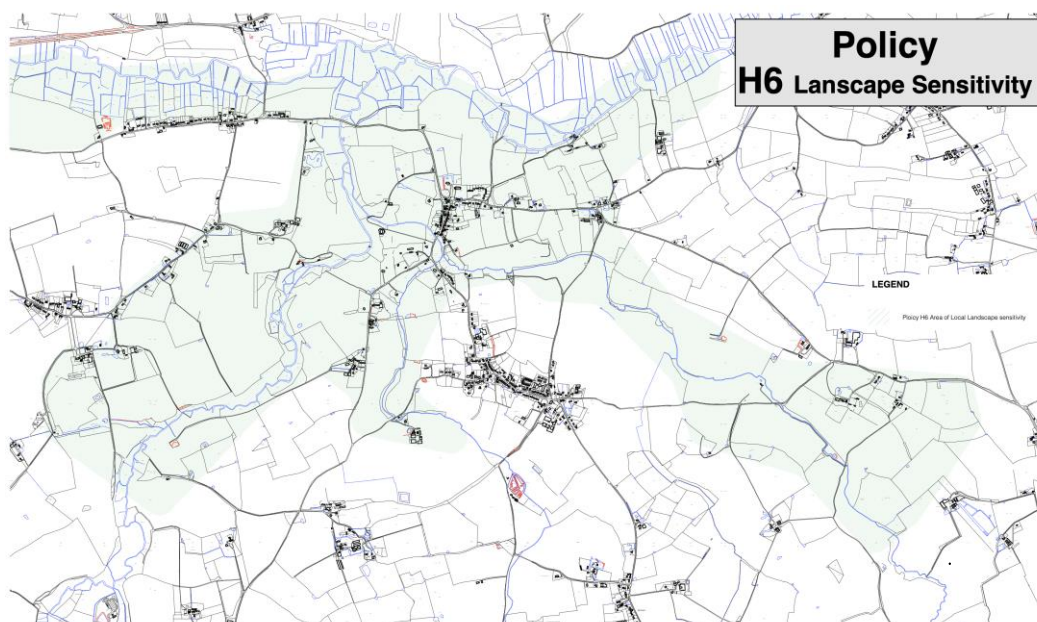
Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment (BMSDCs 2018)

13. The Assessment makes the following comment about the landscape context of the historic environment:

‘The surrounding landscape is agricultural in character, populated with dispersed historic farmsteads. It also includes the remnants of the historic parkland associated Oakley Park, which would also appear to preserve elements of a historically important deer park associated with Hoxne Hall and the Bishops of Norwich. It is also important to note that there survives an area of open land between Hoxne Low Street and Cross Street, preserving their historic separation.’

Conclusions for the Hoxne Neighbourhood Plan

14. The most sensitive landscape runs along the River Dove running north/south through the western edge of the parish and east/west through the Parkland of the former Oakley Park and the gap between Low Street and Cross Street where the Gold Brook joins the Dove
15. The separation between Cross Street and Low Street should be maintained and the area protected from intrusive development.
16. Generally building materials should avoid the use of intrusive urban materials and hedging and tree planting to screen development should reflect local species.
17. The development sites being considered for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan are on the boundary of the plateau claylands and the rolling valley claylands and should take into account the cultural and historic importance of the area and mitigation measures including screening from views from the rolling valley claylands and the wooded valley areas to the west are required.



Andy Robinson 12/5/20