



**The Great Grid Upgrade**

Sea Link

# Sea Link

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Part 2 Suffolk

Chapter 1 Appendix 2.1.B

Landscape Baseline – Suffolk Onshore Scheme

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# 1. Landscape Designations

## 1.1 Landscape Designations Overview

- 1.1.1 Landscapes can be designated for their special landscape or scenic qualities. These areas may be identified in development plans at the national, regional or local scale.
- 1.1.2 The following landscape designations have been identified within the study area and are presented below.

### Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 1.1.3 The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally important designation and has been identified within the study area. The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. The boundary of the AONB is shown on **Application Document 6.4.2.1.2 Landscape Context and Designations**.
- 1.1.4 The value of the Coast and Heaths AONB is considered to be **very high** due to its national designation.
- 1.1.5 The following documents provide further landscape baseline information for the AONB.

### Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Natural Beauty and Special Qualities Indicators

- 1.1.6 The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Natural Beauty and Special Qualities Indicators (Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape Partnership, 2016) document provides Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB indicators for each of the Natural Beauty criterion. Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB indicators relevant to landscape and visual matters and to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Indicators

Natural Beauty indicators	Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Indicator
Landscape quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>close-knit relationship of semi-natural and cultural landscapes and built heritage features;</li><li>important areas of heath and acid grassland;</li><li>strong overall character with some landscape in lower condition due to arable and pastoral agricultural use; and</li><li><i>“A small number of large scale and long established elements on the coast of the AONB divide opinion, being regarded by some as incongruous features and by others as enigmatic; for example the</i></li></ul>



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<b>Natural Beauty indicators</b>	<b>Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Indicator</b>
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*complex military site at Orford Ness. The power stations at Sizewell also divide opinion in this way, however in many views, particularly of the B station, the apparent uncluttered simple appearance and outline as well as the lack of visible human activity, partially mitigate the adverse visual impacts”.*

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Scenic quality

- unique character defined by semi-natural and cultural landscapes and built heritage features;
- contrast of sea cliffs and shingle beaches to flat heaths and farmland and varied habitats and land cover;
- striking landform features;
- opportunities for long distance and panoramic views along shingle beaches and shallow bays and more enclosed traditional farmland; and
- Perceptual qualities include dark skies, bird sounds and big ‘Suffolk skies’.

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Relative wildness

- lightly trafficked access routes contribute to the relatively undeveloped character of the Suffolk coast;
- pockets of relative wildness;
- sense of openness and exposure in places and enclosure in others, including due to forestry plantations; and
- isolated villages and built heritage assets contribute to character.

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Relative tranquillity

- areas of semi-natural habitat with a general absence of development and apparent human activity, contributing to relative tranquillity; and
- localised detractors include seasonal visitors, aircraft and urban fringe development.

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Natural heritage features

- evidence visually of geology, sedimentation and geomorphology; and
- nationally and internationally protected sites and species.

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Cultural heritage

- presence of villages and small towns and built heritage assets;
  - historic field and settlement patterns and evidence of land reclamation dating back to the 12th century;
  - designed landscapes important, including at Thorpeness;
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Natural Beauty indicators	Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Indicator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The Sizewell nuclear complex highlights evidence of time depth across the landscape. Both the nuclear complex and the nearby infrastructure associated with offshore energy generation are part of a developing story of the Suffolk’s Energy Coast”;</li> <li>“Some of the military structures by reason of their scale, design, and cultural importance have now become an accepted part of the landscape, such as the Martello towers or the pagodas. Whereas other infrastructure, such as electricity pylons and the power stations are still cited by some as visual detractors in the landscape, despite the test of time”;</li> <li>harmonious balance between rural landscape and smaller settlements;</li> <li>landscape character and diversity of habitat types dependent on wide range of land management practices; and</li> <li>associations with numerous writers, artists and composers.</li> </ul>

1.1.7 The document also provides Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Indicators for each of the AONB Special Qualities. Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB indicators relevant to landscape and visual matters and to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme are summarised within Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2 Suffolk Coast and Heaths Special Quality Indicators**

Special Quality Indicators	Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Indicator
Health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extensive recreational access and use, including the PRow network and areas designated as open access land.</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strong links between communities and their landscape.</li> </ul>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>active promotion of Suffolk Coast as tourist destination founded on the species qualities of the area.</li> </ul>
Ecosystem goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>several broad habitat types which perform a range of ecosystem goods and services.</li> </ul>

## Suffolk Heritage Coast

- 1.1.8 Heritage Coasts are “*an area of coastline protected and promoted by Natural England in association with local authorities for the enjoyment of the undeveloped coast whilst protecting its natural beauty, nationally important wildlife and landscape features and improving the quality of inshore waters and beaches*” (East Suffolk Council, 2020).
- 1.1.9 A proportion of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB is also defined as Suffolk Heritage Coast within the landscape and visual study area and the Suffolk Heritage Coast extends offshore.
- 1.1.10 As noted in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Management Plan (Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Partnership, 2023), the purpose of Heritage Coast definition is similar to that of an AONB. However, it should be noted that “*the Heritage Coast purpose also includes objectives for conserving the environmental health and biodiversity of inshore waters and beaches, and to extend opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with, the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features*”.
- 1.1.11 Whilst Heritage Coasts are defined and not designated, the landscape value of the Suffolk Heritage Coast is considered to be **very high** due to its recognition for heritage value.

## Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest

- 1.1.12 Local designations include two Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest (designated within Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (East Suffolk Council, 2020)), Benhall Lodge Park, Benhall and Carlton Park, Kelsale, which are located within the study area. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan notes that “*a major attribute of a parkland ‘of note’ is its extensive coverage within the landscape*” and that “*East Suffolk Council will encourage the preservation and enhancement of these parks and gardens of historic interest and their surroundings*”.

## Tree Preservation Orders

- 1.1.13 A TPO is an “*order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity*” (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2014). Within the study area, there are pockets of TPOs including to the northwest of Aldeburgh and on the southern edge of Leiston.
- 1.1.14 Within the landscape assessment, consideration of specific arboricultural assets has been restricted to the contribution TPOs make to present-day landscape character and visual amenity. Further consideration of arboricultural assets is provided within **Application Document 6.10 Arboricultural Impact Assessment**.

## Ancient Woodland

- 1.1.15 Ancient Woodland is “*an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD*” and is “*defined as an irreplaceable habitat*” (Natural England and Forestry Commission, 2022). Within the study area, there are numerous areas of Ancient Woodland, including at Grove Wood to the northeast of Friston and Great Wood to the southeast of Knodishall Common.

- 1.1.16 Within the landscape assessment, consideration of specific arboricultural assets has been restricted to the contribution ancient woodland makes to present-day landscape character and visual amenity. Further consideration of arboricultural assets is provided within **Application Document 6.10 Arboricultural Impact Assessment**.

## Landscape designations baseline for assessment

- 1.1.17 The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and its setting is assessed as part of the landscape assessment. The assessment considers the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Indicators and how the Proposed Project would affect the delivery of the AONB's statutory purpose.
- 1.1.18 As the Suffolk Heritage Coast is within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB within the landscape and visual study area and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Plan contains objectives, policies and action that will be applied to the Heritage Coast also, information will be provided regarding any differences to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB assessment relevant to the Suffolk Heritage Coast.
- 1.1.19 The landscape assessment can be found within **Application Document 6.3.2.1.C Appendix 2.1.C Landscape Designation and Landscape Character Assessment** and summarised within **Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual**.

## Relevant Designations

- 1.1.20 In addition to the above, the study area also contains the following designations:
- Listed buildings;
  - Registered Common Land – Aldringham Green;
  - Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act Access Land;
  - RSPB Reserve – North Warren;
  - Special Protection Area (SPA) – Sandlings;
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – Leiston – Aldeburgh;
  - Scheduled Monuments;
  - Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – The Haven, Aldeburgh;
  - Registered Common Land – Knodishall Common;
  - SPA – Alde-Ore Estuary;
  - Ramsar Site – Alde-Ore Estuary; and
  - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – Alde-Ore & Butley Estuaries.
- 1.1.21 Whilst effects on these designated areas are not assessed in the LVIA, as they are considered in other discipline specific chapters, they inform judgements of landscape value and in the case of registered common land, CRoW Act Access Land and Registered Common Land, is also an important recreational resource, views from which are considered as part of the visual assessment.
- 1.1.22 Within the landscape and visual impact assessment, consideration of specific heritage, access or ecological assets has been restricted to the contribution the designations



make to present-day landscape character and visual amenity. Further consideration of specific heritage, access, or ecological assets, is contained in **Application Document 6.2.2.2 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 2 Ecology and Biodiversity**, **Application Document 6.2.2.3 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 3 Cultural Heritage** and **Application Document 6.2.2.10 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism**.

## Former Landscape Designations

- 1.1.23 To understand the landscape baseline, it is also important to consider historic landscape designations. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Incorporating the First Alteration (Suffolk Coastal District Council (now East Suffolk Council), 2001) and the Second Alteration (Suffolk Coastal District Council (now East Suffolk Council), 2006), has been superseded by the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (East Suffolk Council, 2020). The former Suffolk Coastal Local Plan included locally designated Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). This was referred to within Policy AP13 which set out reasons for designation, limited to characteristics linking to river valley and historic parks and gardens. Policy AP13 stated:
- "The valleys and tributaries of the Rivers Alde, Blyth, Deben, Fynn, Hundred, Mill, Minsmere, Ore and Yox, and the Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest are designated as Special Landscape Areas and shown on the Proposals Map. The District Council will ensure that no development will take place which would be to the material detriment of, or materially detract from, the special landscape quality".*
- 1.1.24 Two previously designated SLAs are relevant to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme, located on the edge of the settlement of Knodishall Common associated with the Hundred River corridor and to the north of Benhall Green associated with the River Fromus corridor. The Suffolk Onshore Scheme does not cross either of the formerly designated SLAs.
- 1.1.25 This policy has now been superseded but the adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (East Suffolk Council, 2020) refers to the previously designated SLAs, stating:
- "Previous Local Plan documents included a county wide approach in the form of Special Landscape Areas (SLA) which originated from the Suffolk Structure Plan. The SLA designations primarily identified the river valleys and tributaries as areas with special landscape attributes that are particularly vulnerable to change."*

## 2. Landscape Baseline

### 2.1 Baseline Conditions

#### Landscape and Seascape Overview

- 2.1.1 Landscape character is a composite of physical, cultural, perceptual and aesthetic elements (Natural England, 2014). Landform, hydrology, vegetation, land cover, land use pattern, cultural and historic features and associations combine to create a common 'sense of place' and identity which can be used to categorise the landscape into definable types and areas. The level of detail and size of the landscape types and areas can be varied to reflect the scale of definition required. It can be applied at a national, regional, and local level.
- 2.1.2 Seascape character, like landscape character, is a composite of physical and cultural elements (Natural England, 2012). Landform, geology, coastal processes, flora and fauna, coastal features, surface features, sunken features, use and past use of coast and sea and associations combine to create an identity definable types and areas. The level of detail and size of the seascape types and areas can be varied to reflect the scale of definition required. It can be applied at a national, regional, and local level.

#### National Landscape Character

- 2.1.3 Those NCAs that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.2.1.3 Landscape Character - National and Regional** and described in Table 2.1. The NCAs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme due to their scale but are described to provide context.

**Table 2.1 National Landscape Character**

National character area	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
82: Suffolk Coast and Heaths (NCA 82)	NCA 82 is described as <i>being “mainly flat or gently rolling, often open but with few commanding viewpoints”</i> . The study notes the designation of Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB in approximately half of the NCA and a great diversity of habitats and species. The study states that the <i>“remaining coast and lowland heaths, which are known locally as Sandlings, form particularly distinctive features, although traditional heath is now much fragmented owing to farmland conversion, forest use and housing development”</i> . The study notes the presence of estuaries, including Alde/Ore, including <i>“extensive wildlife-rich intertidal areas of mudflat and salt marsh”</i> . Settlement patterns are sparse, including small villages and coastal market towns and notes that the NCA <i>“remains a lightly populated, undeveloped area that is notable for its</i>

National character area	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<p><i>tranquillity, high-quality environment and culture, and outstanding wildlife</i>".</p> <p>The study also notes that major infrastructure development provides "<i>challenges as they have the potential to impact on the special qualities of the landscape and seascape</i>".</p>
83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (NCA 83)	<p>NCA 83 is described as comprising a "<i>high and predominantly flat clay plateau that dominates the character of the NCA</i>". The study notes that large areas of woodland are not typical and that "<i>views are frequently open, only sometimes confined by hedges, hedgerow trees and scattered smaller woodlands that are still notable elements of the landscape</i>". The study notes that farming dominates the landscape, predominantly arable, and that it is "<i>mostly an ancient, long settled landscape, and above all this is farming country, with a strong utilitarian and rural character, evoked best in its ancient irregular field patterns that are still discernible over much of the area</i>".</p> <p>The study notes that the area comprises mixed settlement, including nucleated villages, dispersed hamlets and farmsteads and market towns.</p>

## Regional Landscape Character

- 2.1.4 Those regional Landscape Character Types (LCTs) that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.2.1.3 Landscape Character - National and Regional**, as well as part of the study area that is defined as Urban in the study and described in Table 2.2. These LCTs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme due to their scale but are described to provide context.

**Table 2.2 Regional landscape character**

Regional LCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
Forested Estate Sandlands	<p>This LCT is described as "<i>a relatively simple landscape comprising extensive areas of conifer plantations, arable land and some remnant heaths, reflecting the underlying sandy soils. Scots Pine shelterbelts and 'pine lines' are defining characteristics</i>".</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gently rolling and, in places, undulating topography;</li> <li>• Land use is dominated by arable farmland and forestry plantations planted on formerly extensive areas of dry grassland and heath;</li> <li>• A wooded landscape with substantial blocks of coniferous plantation;</li> </ul>

Regional LCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A medium to large scale field pattern, which are mostly rectilinear; and</li> <li>• Sparsely populated settlement pattern which is largely concentrated in nucleated villages that are surrounded by notable scattering of estate farmsteads.</li> </ul> <p>The key objectives for the LCT include protecting and enhancing woodland, protecting heathland vegetation, improving public access, protecting the agricultural landscape, protecting local identity and preserving tranquillity.</p>
Coastal Levels	<p>This LCT is described as <i>“an open, low-lying former marshland landscape, with a strong horizontal emphasis and characterised by wide skies and large fields bounded by a grid like pattern of drains and ditches”</i>.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-lying, draining former coastal marshes adjacent to the coast;</li> <li>• A relatively uniform landscape characterised by extensive patches of coastal grazing marsh, with high ecological importance for breeding waders;</li> <li>• Land used for cattle grazing and some arable cultivation;</li> <li>• An open landscape character, with little to no tree cover; and</li> <li>• A largely unsettled landscape with domestic buildings only on the fringes.</li> </ul> <p>The key objectives for the LCT include supporting the traditional livestock industry and preserving the sense of tranquillity and open, isolated character.</p>
Valley Settled Farmlands	<p>This LCT is described as <i>“settled, often busy landscapes which occur along the sides of the sinuous valley corridors that cut through the East Anglian clay plateau”</i>.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently sloping valleys cut through glacial till, often with deposits of sand and gravel in the valley bottoms;</li> <li>• Dominated by arable fields that are bound by substantial and ancient hedges, along with wet meadows in the valley bottoms and patches of ancient woodland on upper valley slopes;</li> <li>• Small to medium scale landscape, sometimes with a complex enclosure pattern; and</li> </ul>

Regional LCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clustered pattern of farmsteads and hamlets, with some larger market towns.</li> </ul> <p>The key objectives for the LCT include reinstating functional floodplains, protecting the agricultural landscape, protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and key wildlife corridors and protecting local identity.</p>
Wooded Plateau Claylands	<p>This LCT is described as <i>“an ancient wooded landscape of arable farms, associated with heavy clay soils on gently rolling plateau, which are lightly dissected by minor river valleys”</i>.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gently rolling landform associated mainly with glacial till plateaux, often dissected by small river valleys;</li> <li>• A scattering of small to medium- sized ancient woodlands, connected by an irregular network of ancient hedgerows;</li> <li>• Dominated by arable land use;</li> <li>• Varied field pattern including a mixture of irregular and sinuous boundaries, with some 21st century regularisation of field shapes;</li> <li>• Rural settlement is relatively dense, comprising a clustered pattern of villages, hamlets and large outlying farms; and</li> <li>• Settlements have a strong vernacular tradition of timber-framed buildings, tiled roofs and some thatch.</li> </ul> <p>The key objectives for the LCT include conserving and enhancing characteristic ancient small woodland and sinuous enclosure pattern and plan for changes such as infill development and alteration to traditional parklands.</p>
Valley Meadowlands	<p>This LCT is described as <i>“flat, low lying valley floors traditionally supporting a pastoral land use, associated with notable watercourses/rivers. Generally unsettled, with occasional areas of carr woodland and gravel extraction lakes, or ancient meres”</i>.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat, low lying landform associated with deposits of alluvium;</li> <li>• West meadowland, lowland fen and other associated wetland vegetation reflect the wet valley nature of this landscape;</li> <li>• A pastoral landscape with some areas of arable and gravel extraction;</li> </ul>



Regional LCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dense scattering of trees and areas of scrub, including willow and poplar trees, along the course of rivers;</li> <li>• Generally an unsettled landscape, with occasional mill buildings that provide local built features; and</li> <li>• Urban settlements in surrounding areas often impinge on this type.</li> </ul> <p>The key objectives for the LCT include reinstating functional floodplains, supporting the traditional livestock industry, protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and key wildlife corridors, safeguarding wetland habitats and protecting local identity.</p>
Coastal Dunes	<p>This LCT is described as <i>“narrow stretches of open, rolling sand dunes and shingle ridges, adjoining wide, expansive and windswept beaches, in places backed by fringes of pine woods”</i>.</p> <p>Key characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently rolling, in places undulating landform of sand or shingle ridges;</li> <li>• Subject to flooding at high tide;</li> <li>• This is a semi-natural landscape, dominated by dune vegetation;</li> <li>• Localised recreational land use;</li> <li>• Generally unwooded, but pine plantations are a feature in places; and</li> <li>• Largely unsettled, but includes a nuclear power station, the expansion of adjoining coastal settlements and boats, drying racks and fisherman’s huts are local distinctive in places.</li> </ul> <p>The key objectives for the LCT include conserving and enhancing biodiversity, landscape character and cultural heritage of the coastal dune systems.</p>

## County Landscape Character

- 2.1.5 Those county LCTs that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.2.1.4 Landscape Character – County**, as well as part of the study area that is defined as Urban in the study and described in Table 2.3. These LCTs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme due to their scale but are described to provide context.

**Table 2.3 County landscape character**

County LCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
Coastal Dunes and Shingle Ridges	<p>The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“flat or gently rolling landform of sand or shingle;</i></li> <li>• <i>low fragile vegetation;</i></li> <li>• <i>vast open uncluttered landscape;</i></li> <li>• <i>historic military structures;</i></li> <li>• <i>occasional large buildings in an empty landscape; and</i></li> <li>• <i>only in short stretches is there the paraphernalia of intensive tourist activity, beach huts and piers.”</i></li> </ul> <p>Management guidelines include reference to conserving the setting of this landscape, managing the impact of large-scale infrastructure projects and protecting the vegetated shingle and other sensitive habitats.</p>
Coastal Levels	<p>The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“flat marshland adjacent to the coast or estuaries;</i></li> <li>• <i>marine alluvium soils;</i></li> <li>• <i>sinuous and complex mediaeval dyke networks;</i></li> <li>• <i>cattle- grazed wet grassland;</i></li> <li>• <i>widespread modification for arable production;</i></li> <li>• <i>small plantations and carr woodlands;</i></li> <li>• <i>important wildlife conservation areas;</i></li> <li>• <i>unsettled landscape with domestic buildings on the fringes; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Derelict wind pumps.”</i></li> </ul>
Rolling Estate Sandlands	<p>The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“rolling river terraces and coastal slopes;</i></li> <li>• <i>sandy and free draining soils with areas of heathland;</i></li> <li>• <i>pattern of tree belts and straight hedges;</i></li> <li>• <i>landscape parklands;</i></li> <li>• <i>a focus of settlement;</i></li> <li>• <i>19th century red brick buildings with black glazed pantiles in the east;</i></li> </ul>

County LCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>tree belts and plantations throughout;</i></li> <li>• <i>occasional and significant semi-natural woodlands and ribbons of wet woodland; and</i></li> <li>• <i>complex and intimate landscape on valley sides.”</i></li> </ul> <p>Management guidelines include reference to the visual impact of the height, scale and orientation of new buildings and structures in the landscape and restoring and enhancing the pattern of tree belts and small plantations, the historic pattern of boundaries and landscape parklands.</p>
Nearshore Waters	<p>The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“sheltered or moderately sheltered coastal waters, adjacent to long curving bays backed by shingle beaches, vegetated dunes and low cliffs;</i></li> <li>• <i>active length of coast with a fluctuating patchwork of erosion and dynamic nature of coastline illustrated by the inundation of coastal settlements and the creation of shingle features;</i></li> <li>• <i>relatively shallow waters up to approximately 20 metres deep with sand bank systems parallel;</i></li> <li>• <i>interaction of terrestrial, coastal and offshore areas important for biodiversity;</i></li> <li>• <i>commercial fishing activity is relatively intense...beached fishing boats are characteristic in some locations;</i></li> <li>• <i>popular tourist area, notably for walking and nature watching with activity focussed on visitor destinations and tourist towns;</i></li> <li>• <i>strong visual relationship with the predominantly rural coastline. Occasional coastal towns and large-scale developments including energy and military infrastructure evident in some views act as orientation points/ navigation; and</i></li> <li>• <i>offshore shipping and wind farms visible in adjacent seascape character types, subject to weather conditions.”</i></li> </ul> <p>Management guidelines are not included.</p>
Valley Meadowlands	<p>The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“flat landscapes of alluvium or peat on valley floors;</i></li> <li>• <i>grassland divided by a network of wet ditches;</i></li> </ul>

County LCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>occasional carr woodland and plantations of poplar;</i></li> <li>• <i>occasional small reedbeds;</i></li> <li>• <i>unsettled;</i></li> <li>• <i>cattle grazed fields; and</i></li> <li>• <i>fields converted to arable production.”</i></li> </ul> <p>Management guidelines include reference to conserving the setting of this landscape, mitigating the impact of horse grazing where possible, restoring the pattern of drainage and encouraging appropriate planting and management of woodlands.</p>
Ancient Estate Claylands	<p>The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“dissected Boulder Clay plateau;</i></li> <li>• <i>organic pattern of field enclosures;</i></li> <li>• <i>straight boundaries where influence of privately owned estates is strongest;</i></li> <li>• <i>enclosed former greens and commons;</i></li> <li>• <i>parklands and WWII airfields;</i></li> <li>• <i>ancient semi-natural woodland; and</i></li> <li>• <i>villages with dispersed hamlets and farmsteads.”</i></li> </ul> <p>Management guidelines include reference to reinforcing the historic pattern of field boundaries and hedgerow trees, greens, commons and woodland cover, through effective management and managing the impact of land use change on the landscape character.</p>
Rolling Estate Claylands	<p>The relevant key characteristics of this LCT are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“rolling valley-side landscape;</i></li> <li>• <i>medium clay and loamy soils;</i></li> <li>• <i>organic pattern of fields;</i></li> <li>• <i>occasional areas of more rational planned fields;</i></li> <li>• <i>numerous landscape parks;</i></li> <li>• <i>substantial villages;</i></li> <li>• <i>fragmented woodland cover, both ancient and plantation; and</i></li> <li>• <i>winding hedged and occasionally sunken lanes.”</i></li> </ul> <p>Management guidelines include reference to the visual impact of the height, scale and orientation of new buildings and structures in</p>

County LCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	the landscape, reinforcing the historic pattern of field boundaries and hedgerows and maintaining historic parklands, hedgerow trees, moats and ponds in the landscape.

## District Landscape Character

- 2.1.6 Those Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.2.1.5 Landscape Character – District**, are described in Table 2.4 and are subsequently assessed in the landscape assessment. A value judgement and additional baseline notes from the Applicant’s field work undertaken to supplement the published study are given for those LCAs included in the assessment of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme. Other district LCAs within the study area which have been agreed with stakeholders to be excluded from the assessment are described purely to provide context and are not assessed. For LCA B4: Fromus Valley, additional baseline text has been added where relevant from the published Settlement Sensitivity Assessment, further details should be referred to within **Application Document 6.2.2.1 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 1 Landscape and Visual**.

**Table 2.4 District landscape character**

District LCA	Baseline and value judgement
B4: Fromus Valley	<p><u>Summary of description in published study, relevant to the study area.</u></p> <p>The LCA is described as a “<i>subtle shallow valley system containing the market town of Saxmundham and a more dispersed pattern of settlement to the north and south. This valley has a settled character and its outer edges have been influenced by road and rail infrastructure</i>”. The LCA contains wet meadows, arable land and parkland, as well as grassland and recreational fishing. The LCA is well vegetated north of Saxmundham and also contains ancient woodland.</p> <p>The study notes that “<i>to the south of the town is former Hurtshall Park but this has now mostly been converted to arable landuse, although the grounds of Hurts Hall continues to scenically enhance the southern approach to the town along with the church which is seen on higher land behind</i>”.</p> <p>The relevant special qualities and features for the LCA are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<i>a Conservation Area covers the attractive historic core of Saxmundham; and</i></li> <li>• <i>remnant parkland landscapes including veteran trees, perimeter planting, and mansion houses</i>”.</li> </ul> <p>Relevant management guidelines include reference to protecting small-scale areas of pasture and common land, settlement separation, managing poplar plantation, retain and enhancing views to church</p>



towers and the restoration of wet meadows or alder carr, conversion from arable to pasture and planting of veteran trees.

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Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area

- as well as the road and rail infrastructure on the edge of the LCA influencing the scenic quality and tranquillity, there are also steel fabricator industrial buildings present off the B1121 which also locally reduce the landscape value in this part of the LCA;
- the parts of the LCA relevant to the Proposed Project typically includes larger-scale arable field enclosures. This creates the feeling of a comparatively larger-scale landscape in these specific parts of the LCA despite the presence of vegetation blocks within the LCA and in adjacent LCAs which creates some separation from other smaller-scale parts of the LCA with associated intervening planting;
- the existing willow plantation along the River Fromus and relatively recent willow planting to the southwest of Hurts Hall is grown for commercial purposes and based on landowner discussions it is assumed that these will have been felled prior to construction and operation. The plantation therefore does not form the baseline for the landscape assessment; and
- the condition of the landscape appears to be good with some gaps in the hedgerow network, including along the B1121, however these are minimal.

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Relevant information from the Settlement Sensitivity Assessment:

- “Rolling Estate Sandlands and Valley Meadowlands landscape types comprising open arable fields and area of pasture along the valley floor associated with former parkland at Hurst Park;
  - Large to medium scale enclosures and open character;
  - Some loss of hedgerow boundaries through lack of management and removal;
  - The southern edge of Saxmundham is well vegetated and not highly visible on approaching the town...there is no development within this landscape except for the mansion house of Hurst Park within a rural valley context;
  - Remnant historic parkland landscape and associated mansion house and church association;
-

District LCA	Baseline and value judgement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong rural river valley character unspoilt by development and notably no linear development along the road such that the gateway into Saxmundham is clearly defined; and</li> <li>• Important landscape as a rural approach to Saxmundham reinforcing its setting within the Fromus Valley”.</li> </ul> <p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The LCA contains locally designated Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest at Carlton Park, Kelsale, remnant parkland landscapes with mature specimen trees and Saxmundham Conservation Area, which increases the cultural heritage value and local distinctiveness. The cultural heritage value is also increased due to historically defined ‘Important Hedgerows’. The LCA offers recreational opportunities including recreational fishing and the local PRoW network. The vegetation network and ancient woodland contributes to the natural heritage value and also scenic quality including woodland edge. The busy B1121 and rail infrastructure reduces the tranquillity in parts of the LCA. The LCA has functional value relating to the approach to the settlement of Saxmundham. The value of LCA B4 is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>
B5: Alde Valley	<p>The Alde Valley is a relatively long valley system, with attractive compositions of landscape features and topography giving rise to varied and scenic views.</p> <p>The relevant special qualities and features for the LCA are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“scenic qualities of this river valley relate to its high tranquillity and deeply rural unspoilt character;</i></li> <li>• <i>much of the area has a traditional feel to both its landscape and its built forms, relatively untouched by 20th century development; and</i></li> <li>• <i>valley bottoms have a quiet and empty character, and well vegetated lanes provide intimacy”.</i></li> </ul> <p>Relevant management guidelines include reference to protecting the quiet rural character of the villages and maintaining their historic feel, protecting the setting of historic buildings, farmsteads or clusters of traditional built form and avoid inappropriate siting of large-scale modern farm buildings that may be visually intrusive in views across the valley.</p>
D4: Thorpeness to Aldeburgh	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>The LCA is described as <i>“an expansive, open and windswept landscape. The sense of scale strongly contrasts with the small-scale, sheltered character of the settlements of Thorpeness and Aldeburgh which represent important cultural and historical tourism features”</i>. The LCA has heritage connections, including a port in Aldeburgh, as well as cultural associations, including Joseph Mallord William (J.M.W)Turner. The area is considered a hotspot for tourism and</p>

recreation. The area is considered a hotspot for tourism and recreation.

The relevant special qualities and features for the LCA are set out as:

- *“Leiston to Aldeburgh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covers much of the area, comprising a rich mosaic of acid grassland, heath, scrub, woodland, fen, open water and vegetated shingle, which is rare in the Study Area”;*
- *this coastal area is valued for nature conservation; Thorpeness beach is a vegetated shingle beach and there is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) north of Aldeburgh; and*
- *Thorpeness and Aldeburgh are Conservation Areas and contain many landmark buildings and, Aldeburgh in particular, is associated with a rich history for such a small settlement”.*

Relevant management guidelines include reference to protecting the sense of openness and separation between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness, protecting the natural character of the foreshore and its vegetated shingle, managing the use of the area for recreation whilst protecting nature conservation value and ensuring the special qualities of Aldeburgh and Thorpeness are maintained.

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Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area

- distinctive groups of pine trees, including to the east of Leiston Road (B1122);
- recreational access along the coastline, including the approved King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), often with limited intervisibility with the sea due to intervening landform;
- intervisibility with the existing OHL further onshore and built form at Sizewell;
- influence of built form within Thorpeness and Aldeburgh, albeit some separation from parts of the LCA due to intervening vegetation;
- despite traffic along the roads, including Thorpe Road, it remains a calm and tranquil landscape;
- hard engineering along the small parts of the coastline; and
- hydrological features onshore through large-scale pastoral land.

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Landscape value judgement

The LCA lies within the Coast and Heaths AONB and Suffolk Heritage Coast, which increases value. The open, expansive landscape and the coastline has highly scenic qualities. Recreational opportunities

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District LCA	Baseline and value judgement
	<p>include the approved King Charles III England Coast Path (National Trail), Suffolk Coast Path and the local PRow network. The ancient woodland, ecological designations and coastal vegetation increase the natural heritage and functional value. The LCA has associations with the arts, specifically J.M.W Turner, which increases its value in terms of association. The cultural heritage value is increased with references including the former Aldeburgh port and part of a historically defined 'Important Hedgerow' located within.</p> <p>The value of LCA D4 is considered to be <b>very high</b>.</p>
J4: Alde Estuary	<p>The LCA is described as <i>“a distinctive landscape with a strong sense of place focused on the broadly meandering river as it flows east towards the sea”</i>. The broad expanse of the estuary, lack of settlement and expansive views from the valley sides give the area a strong sense of remoteness. The area is considered a hotspot for tourism and recreation.</p> <p>The relevant special qualities and features for the LCA are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“this is a particularly quiet and tranquil part of the district... The broad expanse of the estuary, lack of settlement, limited accessibility across the estuary...and expansive views from the valley sides give this landscape a strong sense of remoteness and isolation”; and</i></li> <li>• <i>the Alde Estuary is covered by several national and European nature designations and has a number of nature reserves; and</i></li> <li>• <i>the character area is entirely within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB”</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Relevant management guidelines include reference to protecting open views across the estuary from visual intrusion, for example from new tall vertical features such as masts or turbines or new urban development. They also include reference to protecting important habitats and bird populations through careful management of recreation and access.</p>
K3: Aldringham and Friston Sandlands	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>The LCA is described as a <i>“flat and gently rolling farmland, regularly interspersed with small woodlands, and strips, and oak studded field boundaries”</i>. The LCA is considered a hotspot for tourism and recreation and is distinguished by its Sandlings heathland character and relationship with the coast. <i>“Pockets of heathland and woodlands exist alongside large-scale intensive agriculture, with leisure and tourism featuring heavily near the coast”</i>.</p> <p>The LCA is important for rare birds and Sizewell exists behind a series of Marshes. The LCA contains the double row of <i>“giant pylons that cross the area”</i> which has a <i>“substantial negative impact in the more open areas”</i>. The visual experience varies through the LCA, including</p>

some scenic areas within woodland but also less so near to Leiston where the overhead line is prominent.

The relevant special qualities and features for the LCA are set out as:

- *“much of the southern and eastern part of the Area is within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. This area features more of the remaining semi-natural habitats and less arable land but also features much more settlement;*
- *the settlements of Aldeburgh and Thorpeness are key components of this landscape. They have very different appearance and histories, exerting a significant influence on the overall character of the area and shaping people's experience and recreational focus; and*
- *two long distance footpaths pass through the area, The Sandlings Walk follows a route along the south of the [word missing in published document] and the Suffolk Coast path. The latter follows the route known as the Sailors' Path which connects Snape to Aldeburgh”.*

Relevant management guidelines include reference to protecting remnant heathlands, protecting the sense and openness between settlements of Aldeburgh and Thorpeness and avoid ad hoc incremental development particularly along the open coast road and managing the AONB landscape to ensure its qualities are not harmed. Guidelines also include restoring, maintaining and enhancing the network of pine lines, tree belts and small plantations and managing areas of existing scrub and woodland.

#### Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area

- vegetation network includes individual trees within field enclosures which are distinctive in comparison to wooded blocks;
- pig farming adjacent to the A1094 is distinctive;
- hedgerow whip planting visible in specific locations where hedgerow has been lost or is in a bad condition;
- distinctive pockets of gorse, especially within the golf course north-west of Aldeburgh;
- golf courses are a land use within the LCA;
- generally large-scale landscape but with mixed vegetation cover creating different levels of enclosure across the LCA and generally restricting longer distance intervisibility due to intervening layered vegetation across the flat landscape;
- typically, scattered properties and farmsteads interspersed within the landscape;



District LCA	Baseline and value judgement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local community area including mown pathways through meadowland, allotments, and benches on the northern edge of Friston;</li> <li>• sunken lanes lined with hedgerows on high banks in places; and</li> <li>• pockets of more undulating land near to Friston.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>Part of the LCA lies within the Coast and Heaths AONB and Suffolk Heritage Coast. Recreational opportunities include various recreational routes, including the Suffolk Coast Path and the Sailors Path, as well as the local PRoW network. The natural heritage value is increased due to ecological designations and ecologically defined 'Important Hedgerows'. The cultural heritage value is increased due to historically defined 'Important Hedgerows'. Scenic quality varies through the LCA, including some areas of high scenic quality such as woodland edges, as well as detracting features, notably the existing overhead line (OHL) extending from Sizewell.</p> <p>The value of LCA K3 is considered to be <b>very high</b>.</p>
L1: Heveningham and Knodishall Estate Claylands	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>The LCA is described as <i>"a landscape of quiet farmland with a simple, unified and deeply rural character"</i>. The LCA comprises scattered farms and hamlets with predominantly arable farmland. <i>"Large industrial buildings have a negative impact, especially where there is inadequate screening"</i>. Vegetation includes woodland, roadside trees and hedges and field boundary vegetation. The LCA also contains various ecological designations. Near to Saxmundham, the LCA contains Christmas Tree plantation.</p> <p>The relevant special qualities and features for the LCA are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"its particularly unified character - a peaceful, deeply rural 'backwater', focused on farming; and</i></li> <li>• <i>there is little intrusion from modern development"</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Relevant management guidelines include reference to protecting the unspoilt, quiet and essentially undeveloped rural character, protecting the plateau landscape from visual intrusion of development in areas beyond the character areas, for example from new tall vertical features from development of scale that harms the prevailing light and scattered nature of the existing development. Guidelines also include the careful management of oak trees, manage semi-natural woodland, manage hedgerows and plan for enhancements to biodiversity.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• medium to large-scale agricultural field enclosures;</li> </ul>

District LCA	Baseline and value judgement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• due to flat landform and layered vegetation network, long distance views to the ground plane in the distance are typically foreshortened;</li> <li>• largely intact network of hedgerows with some sections where the condition is more variable with fragmentation;</li> <li>• presence of railway line on a slight embankment;</li> <li>• scattered properties and farmsteads interspersed in the landscape, some of which with outbuildings set within mature tree vegetation;</li> <li>• linear belts of mature trees, individual trees and blocks of woodland create mixed vegetation pattern; and</li> <li>• presence of OHL in neighbouring LCA exerts a prominence within this LCA.</li> </ul> <p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The LCA has recreational opportunities along the local PRoW network and scenic quality, tranquillity and remoteness qualities across the large-scale arable farmland and woodland blocks. However, the green infrastructure network appears fragmented in parts of the LCA due to the isolated blocks of woodland and remnant trees where hedgerows are likely to have been removed which decreases the value. The LCA has natural heritage value, including ecological designations, ancient woodland and ecologically defined 'Important Hedgerows' across the LCA, however due to the large-scale arable farmland, habitats are likely to be relatively limited. The LCA has cultural heritage value, including the historic landscapes associated with Friston and Knodishall and historically defined 'Important Hedgerows'. The LCA comprises functional value relating to the setting to settlement edges, including Saxmundham.</p> <p>The value of LCA L1 is considered to be <b>medium</b>.</p>
O1: Benhall Estate Sandlands	<p><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p>The LCA is characterised by shallow valley slopes and is bisected by the A12 corridor which creates a sense of separation through the character.</p> <p>The relevant special qualities and features for the LCA are set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“attractive estate farmland and parkland landscapes, each with strong and distinctive character, unified by the well wooded nature of the landscape and the mix of native and semi-ornamental tree species;</i></li> <li>• <i>Benhall Park is recognised as a ‘Park or Garden of Historic or Landscape Interest’ by the District Council and offers a scenic combination of pasture and scattered trees, for the most part unappreciable to traffic passing on the A12; and</i></li> </ul>

District LCA	Baseline and value judgement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>away from the busy A12 corridor the area provides a quiet peaceful area of very productive countryside, overlooked by crowds heading past to Aldeburgh, Dunwich and Southwold.”</li> </ul> <p>Relevant management guidelines include reference to protecting the quiet, rural and largely unsettled area from future development, protecting the woodland belts and hedges and managing and enhancing existing tree cover and biodiversity in the agricultural and parkland landscapes.</p> <p><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presence of railway line which adds to the noise and movement along the various road networks; and</li> <li>strong network of recreational access along PRoW network.</li> </ul> <p><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p>The LCA contains locally designated Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest at Benhall Park and includes parkland landscapes which increase the cultural heritage value and local distinctiveness. The shallow valley slopes also increase local distinctiveness. The vegetation network and ancient woodland contributes to the natural heritage value and also scenic quality including woodland edge. The LCA offers recreational opportunities including the local PRoW network. The busy road networks and railway line reduces the tranquillity in parts of the LCA.</p> <p>The value of LCA O1 is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>

### National Seascape Character

- 2.1.7 The SCA that the study area falls within is shown on **Application Document 6.4.2.1.6 Seascape Character – National, Regional and District** and described in Table 2.5. These SCAs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme due to their scale but they are described to provide context.

**Table 2.5 Suffolk coastal landscape character**

National SCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
10: Suffolk Coastal Waters	<p>The relevant key characteristics defined in the study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“a rich mixture of unique coastal lowland landscapes some of which submerged;</li> </ul>

National SCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>estuaries characterised by wildlife-rich salt-marsh and mudflat, with significant reclaimed freshwater marshes protected by earth-bank river walls;</i></li> <li>• <i>low-lying coastline dominated by coastal processes and estuarine influences;</i></li> <li>• <i>characterised by a nationally significant concentration of vegetated shingle structures, soft cliffs and coastal lagoon habitats with open sloping beaches;</i></li> <li>• <i>large scale panoramic views of the seascape dominated by busy offshore North Sea shipping waters including static vessels; and</i></li> <li>• <i>long distance coastal footpath (Suffolk Coast Path)".</i></li> </ul>

### Regional Seascape Character

- 2.1.8 The SCTs that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.2.1.6 Seascape Character – National, Regional and District** and described in Table 2.6. A value judgement is given for those SCTs included in the assessment of the Suffolk Onshore Scheme and the other SCTs within the study area are described to provide context.

**Table 2.6 Regional seascape character**

Regional SCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
01: Inland Navigable Waters	<p>The relevant key characteristics defined in the study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“sheltered estuarine waters and gently meandering tidal rivers fringed by bays and small inlets or creeks where tributaries enter. Tidal muds and occasional sandy or shingle beaches revealed at low tide;</i></li> <li>• <i>low lying and generally flat intertidal muds, salt marshes and coastal levels contrast to stretches of river with pronounced valley sides, localised soft cliffs expressing underlying geology;</i></li> <li>• <i>wetlands are of importance for breeding birds in the Summer and overwintering water birds;</i></li> <li>• <i>the remains of past wharfs along the foreshore and historic ship hulks in the mudflats contribute to time depth;</i></li> <li>• <i>often busy waters, piloted by some large commercial vessels and small pleasure craft to inland ports and</i></li> </ul>

Regional SCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<p><i>marinas which have typical infrastructure including quays, jetties, boatyards, slipways and in some cases warehouses;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>recreational sailing widespread. Landward areas are popular for walking, bird watching and angling; and</i></li> <li><i>long distance and relatively expansive views inland possible, especially across adjacent low-lying marshes. Views to adjacent towns, major ports and infrastructure have localised urbanising effect”.</i></li> </ul>
03: Nearshore Waters	<p data-bbox="459 674 1437 707"><u>Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area</u></p> <p data-bbox="459 719 1321 752">The relevant key characteristics defined in the study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“sheltered or moderately sheltered coastal waters, adjacent to long curving bays backed by shingle beaches, vegetated dunes, low cliffs and occasional coastal settlements;</i></li> <li><i>interaction of terrestrial, coastal and offshore areas important for biodiversity;</i></li> <li><i>strategically important coastline with numerous historic military sites;</i></li> <li><i>popular tourist area, notably for walking and nature watching with activity focussed on visitor destinations and tourist towns located along the coast;</i></li> <li><i>sea fishing, sailing and water-sports activity throughout, albeit centred upon destination towns and approaches to navigable rivers;</i></li> <li><i>strong cultural associations, notably in art;</i></li> <li><i>strong visual relationship with the predominantly rural coastline. Occasional coastal towns and large-scale developments including energy and military infrastructure evident in some views act as orientation points/navigation aids; and</i></li> <li><i>expansive views offshore encompass largely undeveloped seascape. Offshore shipping and wind farms visible in adjacent seascape character types, subject to weather conditions”.</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="459 1794 1390 1872"><u>Additional baseline notes from Applicant field work relevant to the study area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>hard engineering along small sections of the coastline.</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="459 1951 863 1984"><u>Landscape value judgement</u></p> <p data-bbox="459 1995 1437 2074">The SCT is located adjacent to the Coast and Heaths AONB and lies within the Suffolk Heritage Coast. The SCT has associations with art,</p>



Regional SCT	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	<p>specifically J.M.W Turner, which increases value in terms of association. The SCT has scenic quality associated with the rural coastline, noting some detracting features including energy infrastructure. There is cultural heritage value linking to historic military sites and natural heritage value as the SCT is important for biodiversity, as noted in the published study.</p> <p>The value of SCT 03 is considered to be <b>high</b>.</p>

## District Seascape Character

- 2.1.9 Those Coastal Character Areas (CCAs) that the study area falls within are shown on **Application Document 6.4.2.1.6 Seascape Character – National, Regional and District** and are described in Table 2.7. These CCAs largely duplicate the relevant LCAs set out within the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (SCLCA). Therefore, these CCAs are not specifically assessed in relation to the Suffolk Onshore Scheme but have been used to inform landscape baseline and the assessment on landscape character.

**Table 2.7 Coastal character areas**

District CCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
Thorpeness to Aldeburgh Coast	<p>The CCA is described as <i>“an expansive, open, windswept landscape and this sense of scale is strongly contrasted with the small-scale, sheltered character of the settlements”</i>. The study makes reference to the valley floor of Hundred River comprising of <i>“mainly reclaimed drained marshes used for grazing, is divided by regular, reed filled ditches and wetland areas, and dissected by a disused railway embankment which used to connect Aldeburgh with Saxmundham”</i> and scrub vegetation. The study notes the road between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness <i>“offering views inland and out to sea”</i> and associations with artists such as J.M.W. Turner.</p> <p>Management guidelines include reference to protecting the sense of separation and openness between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness, protecting the natural character of the foreshore and vegetated shingle and managing existing scrub and woodland.</p>
Alde Estuary	<p>The CCA is described as <i>“defined by the Alde estuary, comprising meandering watercourses flanked by areas of intertidal mudflat, backed by coastal grazing marsh and gentle valley sides of rolling arable farmland with areas of remnant heath and plantation woodland beyond”</i>. The study notes the outstanding nature conservation value of the CCA, including numerous ecological designations, and layers of historical activity across the estuary.</p>

District CCA	Summary of description in published study relevant to the study area
	Management guidelines include reference to protecting open views across the estuary.

### Landscape and Seascape baseline for assessment

- 2.1.10 As agreed through the scoping process and subsequent consultation with stakeholders, the LCAs and CCAs scoped in and out of the assessment of effects on landscape character at both construction, maintenance and decommissioning and operation are set out in Table 2.8, with further explanatory text provided in the succeeding paragraphs.

**Table 2.8 LCAs and CCAs scoped in and out of the preliminary assessment of effects on landscape character**

Project Phase	Scoped in	Scoped out
Construction and decommissioning	SCLCA: LCAs B4, D4, K3, L1 and O1 SCASNE: SCT 03	SCLCA: LCAs B5, J4 SCASNE: SCT 01
Operation and maintenance	SCLCA: LCAs B4, D4, K3, L1 and O1 SCASNE: SCT 03	SCLCA: LCAs B5, J4 SCASNE: SCT 01

- 2.1.11 SCLCA LCAs B5 and J4 and SCASNE SCT 01 are scoped out for construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning due to a lack of inter-visibility with the Suffolk Onshore Scheme such that effects on the setting or perceptual qualities of these LCAs and SCT would be limited with no significant residual effect.
- 2.1.12 As noted above the TTLCA has been used to inform landscape baseline and the assessment of landscape character. However, the CCAs are scoped out for the assessment of effects on landscape character at construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning because of the duplications with the relevant LCAs set out within the SCLCA, that are scoped in for the assessment. This has been discussed and agreed with stakeholders through landscape thematic meetings (see **Application Document 7.4.8 Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council**).

# References

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